

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church Newark, Ohio

Annual Report

FOR THE YEAR 2025

Between the winter and the spring,
To add to our joy and sport,
Comes a pause in the year's occupation,
That's known as the "annual report."

It's the bane of our existence
With its detail of every sort,
This involved, inquisitive query,
This loquacious annual report.

Yet the facts can be clearly stated,
Without shame and with no retort,
We've again known God's blessing,
It's all spelled out in the annual report!

**Annual Report meeting in conjunction with services
January 24/25, 2026**

PASTOR'S REPORT

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

That salutation sounds so formal. Yet it reminds us of the bond we hold in common. We are not gathered around an ideology, a party, a flag, or some charismatic leader. We are gathered in the name of Jesus, who calls us to be part of one great, blessed family.

Our sanctuary stands in downtown Newark, a testament to both its antiquity and its centrality. It is a beautiful building – a witness to the glory of God and the importance of its purpose, and we have worked hard to maintain and preserve it. Over the past year we have patched holes in the roof, repaired leaks and the damage caused to the ceiling and organ workings; we have driven out the bats (hopefully!), and are renovating our sign – all to ensure that St. Paul's endures into the future.

But does the future need us? Decades of nationwide church decline make it clear our purpose and value is no longer simply assumed. Our society is making it clear it is no longer certain why or whether it needs us, its trust eroded by incessant disputes, scandals, and the politicization of Christianity.

2025 was one of the most tumultuous in our country's history, and 2026 is likely to be even worse. Political corruption, a widening economic disparity, the erosion of economic safety nets and the gutting of national relief organizations are pushing more people into poverty. We see the effects around us in the form of increased homelessness and requests for aid from those who have been laid off or simply find it impossible to keep up with the rising cost of living.

Last year we continued offering monthly community meals during the warmer months. Perhaps these need to be continued year-round? This year we are exploring whether to join with Holy Trinity Lutheran in expanding our ministry to the homeless, sick, and hungry in our community. The need is rapidly growing – and St. Paul's stands in the middle of it all, a monument to the one who insisted that we see, value, and respond to these ones in need, reminding us that they too are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the face of such need, the church rediscovers its purpose. I believe that 2026, for all its challenges, will offer us great opportunities to grow deeper in faith and renew our sense of purpose. The Spirit is alive in our congregation, and I look forward to discovering with you its purpose and guidance for us all.

God bless you all, and God grant us a blessed new year! **Pastor Martin**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

The most notable event at St. Paul's this year was the visit from our sister congregation of St. Bartholomew's in Wittenburg, Germany. Ten people visited, several coming to America for the first time. And although there were some translation issues to address, we shared the languages of worship, music, nature, history, food, and new experiences for them like attending a minor league baseball game. Thanks to Kerrill Foster and Fred Freytag for coordinating the visit and to all the host families and others who helped make it such an eventful week.

2025 also brought a continuation of the community picnics we started in 2024. That year, we held three picnics. This year, we expanded to five picnics - from June to October - with growing attendance by neighbors and community members as well. Plus, thanks to Thrivent support, the direct cash outlay for burgers, hot dogs, buns and ice cream was fully funded.

With the completion of the church directory (available where you grab your weekly bulletin), we now have a handy way to contact each other, look up those familiar faces to which you just can't place the name, and just as importantly, add notes in the back as new folks join us for services.

Speaking of service, the proposed involvement in ministry to the homeless remains a proposal. While council will continue to arrange opportunities for questions to be asked and answered, particularly by those who have been most involved in providing those services at Holy Trinity, there have been no commitments or decisions. We look forward to working with the congregation to determine how best to answer God's call on this topic.

Finally, some notes about volunteers. I am very grateful to Greta Blegvad and Mary Billy for their now-completed service on the council, Julie Hippen and Beth Warner for joining the council, and Sally Fink for re-joining the council. As you have questions or comments, please reach out to the pastor or any of us on the council.

Still, most volunteers don't come with terms of office, choir seasons, or formal committees. You are the ones who bring a dish to a potluck, make coffee, clean tables, set the altar linens, light the luminaries, serve as ushers, shovel the snow, read the scripture, send a get well greeting, sing along with the hymns, contribute to the mitten tree or rummage sale, offer a ride, welcome a newcomer, or help take down the Christmas decorations. You are all God's hands. Thank you.

And if you're not sure how you can help, we'd be glad to orient you. ***Jerry Young***

CONGREGATION CARE COMMITTEE:

Congregational Care Committee...Here it is (brief as usual)Shut-in friends were visited each month in person, or by phone, or by greeting card...we aim to make some contact with each shut-in friend monthly, or more often. The Word in Season devotional booklets were distributed quarterly to all shut-in friends.

Respectfully submitted, Gail Grangaard and Debbie Anctil, co-chairmen.

FOOD PANTRY COMMITTEE

In 2024 St Paul's contributed 436 pounds of food and \$985 to FPN of Licking County. Donations are always welcome!

Kim Everingham, Linda Kinser, and Geoff Kaercher, Food Pantry Committee

FOUR CHURCH FARM REPORT

No report for 2025.

Mark Finck, Secretary, Four Church Farm

GRIEF GROUP

The Grief Support Group meets at 1:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. We are a small group and we discuss a variety of topics. If you are grieving, come join us.

Submitted by Jean Hovland.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE:

Committee members: John Jordan, Don Miller, Greta Blegvad, Charlie Laidlaw-Smith, Diane Ganz

We were fortunate not to have any major repairs needed this year. At one point there was water coming through the ceiling in the choir transept, but it was determined to be through an old unused blower in the tower. We are scheduling Durable Slate Co. to finish stone and mortar repairs in 2026 and will remove the blower apparatus at that time.

Because we finally feel that the problem of leakage around the bell tower is finally solved, we arranged for paint and plaster repair in several areas of the sanctuary. This was very satisfactorily completed before Easter.

It was necessary to find someone new to care for the lawns and courtyard as

well as snow removal. We are very happy that member Sam Hippen was willing to take on this job. Parking lot snow removal continues to be the responsibility of Phoenix School which rents parking spaces during the school year.

This spring we renewed our contract with Phoenix School/Licking County Board of Education for their use of our parking lot. Because of increased costs and usage the rent was raised to \$4,917/year.

After many years we finally renovated the main restrooms in the education building. We are grateful to Tim O'Keefe who organized and carried out the project. The cost was covered by WELCA.

A generous member arranged for serious bat abatement work to be done in our buildings. All detectable entry points were sealed over a period of time to allow existing bats to leave and prevent new residents. Time will tell how effective this was but we are hopeful.

Greta has been arranging for the renovation of St. Paul's sign on the corner of the sanctuary. It was worn, weathered, and damaged during the construction of the round-a-bout. What is currently there is temporary until the newly built interior is completed. It will look much the same as the classic old one, but with far better lighting.

We continue to be thankful for the generous work of Hank and Tammy Trites in maintaining the plantings around the buildings and for the attractive seasonal plantings around the entrance. The Fallers have kept our buildings presentable and are always willing to address specific areas when asked.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Ganz

RENTAL PROPERTY COMMITTEE:

All of the Church Rental Properties are currently rented. After a generous donation, we now have eight properties. The value of these properties is over one million dollars. As of February 1, 2025, the committee hired Encore Real Estate Services to manage these properties.

We welcomed two new tenants during the year which required additional property maintenance including cleaning, interior and exterior painting, roof repair, tree cutting and driveway access. A wheelchair ramp was also constructed at the 28th Street property for Wayne and Margaret Marx through a government grant program.

The gross income from these properties, before expenses, was \$97,468.70 in 2025. Rental income of \$33,000.00 was added to the Operating Fund during 2025.

A special mention and thank you to our committee members; Dick Daly, Dan Fischer, Don Grube, Gerald DePalmo, Mike Campbell and Kerrill Foster.

Jim Rengert, Rental Property Manager

WOMEN of the ELCA: *Co-Chairs, Diane Ganz & Kerrill Foster, secretary, Shirley Campbell, Treasurer – Debbie Anctil*

We collected fewer hats and mittens for the Salvation Army this year. In addition we collected over 285 pairs of socks and 210 pairs of underwear in March for the YES Club. Marti Kolb and Kendell Stotts continue to spearhead those projects. Ruth Circle continues to meet on the **2nd Wednesday** of the month at **9:30 a.m.** Rummage Sale in April was a great success making \$1,700 which was sent to Lutheran World Relief Disaster Fund! We were pleased to be able to fund the refresh of the main bathrooms with the funds from previous rummage sales costing nearly \$4,000. A meeting will be held in February after church to discuss plans for 2026's sale. Please join us if you can help. Our thanks again to Florence Knerr for sending out birthday cards. We collected enough school supplies to make over 120 school kits for Lutheran World Relief. Diane Ganz and Gail Grangaard led this project. Thanks to Geoff Kaercher and Gail & John Grangaard for delivering them to the collection site!

– Kerrill Foster, & Diane Ganz, St. Paul's WELCA

TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Name

Account Name	January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025	
Receipts	Disbursements	Ending Balance
General Operating Fund Balance	\$232,214.55	\$254,971.41
Altar Flowers and Candles Balance	\$1,047.00	\$1,164.95
Christian Education Fund Balance	\$2,099.68	\$-
Youth Ministry Fund Balance	\$972.61	\$-
Mecklenburg Visit Fund Balance	\$1,047.00	\$5,712.87
Benevolence Balance	\$5,276.00	\$5,276.00
Thrive! Campaign 2022-2024 Balance	\$40.00	\$-
Pastor's Discretionary Fund Balance	\$1,249.48	\$335.77
Memorial Fund - Unencumbered Balance	\$1,200.00	\$-
2024 Sacristy Roof Fund Balance	\$9,805.00	\$-
Shannon Trust Balance	\$5,000.00	\$-
Seminarian Fund Balance	\$-	\$1,205.90
Community Outreach/Pass-Through Funds Balance	\$14,252.58	\$14,252.59
Rental Property Balance	\$97,468.70	\$94,553.73
Newark City Payment Balance	\$-	\$4,226.00
2023 Parking Lot Paving Balance	\$5,417.00	\$-
Choir Income Fund	\$165.00	\$900.00
Matthew's Kitchen Fund Balance	\$-	\$-
Mary A Ponser Bequest Balance	\$4,597.43	\$-
Thrivent Choice Dollars Balance	\$1,436.00	\$27.94
Lucas Bible Fund Balance	\$-	\$-
New Bell Fund Balance	\$-	\$-
Bob & Ruth Watson Undesignated Fund Balance	\$-	\$-
Schoffner Fund Undesignated Balance	\$-	\$19,464.30
Margaret Ann Dupler Bequest Fund Balance	\$10,996.83	\$-
Dr. Robert Wright Undesignated Fund Balance	\$-	\$9,795.00
Land, building, designated & undesignated assets	\$44,269.42	\$1,184.78
	\$438,554.28	\$413,071.24
		<u>\$5,355,110.79</u>

**At the time of this report, no information on 4th quarter mutual fund gain/loss was available.*

2025 Benevolence Paid to Synod \$5,276.00
Checking Account Balance – January 1, 2025 \$ 198,093.63
Checking Account Balance – December 31, 2025 \$161,016.88
Investments - Certificates of Deposits and Savings 12/31/25

Interest only endowments: Principle

Interest Designation

Davis Fund-Edward Jones	\$254,023.91	75% Current Expenses
Weiss Fund PNB Mutual Funds	101,715.14	25% Discretionary
Lambert Fund PNB Mutual Funds	27,524.96	33% Youth Ministries 67% Youth Education 100 % Current Expenses

Principle & Interest Designated Funds: Amount

Savings: Heartland Bank - money market	\$69,737.62
includes Lucas Bible Fund	+1,966.74
Weiss Interest	+4,010.00
Total	\$75,714.69

Total **\$75,714.69**

Designated Funds

Amount **Designation**

Edward Jones Danford Fund	\$27,396.69	Interest for Seminarian
\$11,403.00 Principal	(\$15,993.69 <i>accumulated interest</i>)	
Edward Jones Ponser Fund	37,887.19	Undesignated
Edward Jones Youth Gathering Fund	24,723.03	100% Youth Gathering

Undesignated Funds

Margaret Dupler Undesignated Fund	\$85,026.78
Robert Wright Undesignated Fund	48,540.00
Gladys Schoffner Undesignated Fund	11,972.54
Shannon Trust Undesignated Fund	5,000.00
Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA	22,834.57
Bob & Ruth Watson Thrivent Fund	73,604.35*

**At the time of this report, no information on 4th quarter mutual fund gain/loss was available.*

– Report Submitted by Financial Secretary, Kerrill Foster 01/14/2026

VARIOUS BENEVOLENT PROJECTS of the congregation:

1. The Licking County Coalition of Care, The coalition attempts to help people in need through monetary and other assistance to help with rent and utility payments, prescription costs, and other very basic human needs. At St. Paul's we support this ministry through a special offering received on the first weekend of each month. In 2025 a total of **\$3,025.00** was donated by the members of St. Paul's and given to the Coalition of Care for distribution.

- 2. Licking County Jail Ministries** Our annual contribution of \$500 was made.
- 3. Community Center** A \$500 pass through donation was made.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT WE REGULARLY HOST:

Narcotics Anonymous was added during 2006 as a group meeting on Friday evenings in Danford Hall at 7:00 p.m. to assist people trying to live free of narcotics. It operates on much the same formula as A.A. Meetings continue to be held in Danford Hall on Friday evenings at 7 p.m.

Alcoholics Anonymous In 2025, AA met in on Saturdays, Tuesdays and Fridays in either Danford Hall or Weisgerber Lounge.

The Land of Legend Fly Fishers, who meet on the second, third and fourth Mondays of each month to teach such skills as fly tying and rod building.

February Birthdays

1 -	Christopher Logan	Paul Meyers	16 -	Clara Hinger
2 -	Denise Crews	Courtney Swisher		Connie Rutter
	Ryan Green	8 - Silas Engle-Abbott	20 -	Marti Kolb-Conner
	Tiffany Myers	Emily Ossa	22 -	Nick Baker
3 -	Gene Crawmer	10 - Carlos McElfresh		Thelma Trainor
	Traci Dupler	12 - Dick Daly	23 -	Arianna Hinger
	Karen Jordan	Susan Enderle		Michael Mumaw
	Katherine Plante	Daniel Fuller		Tanya Myers
4 -	Troy Triplett	13 – Jeff Kinser	26 –	Kate (Daly) Jordan- Downs
	Tabatha Trost	15 - Matt		
6 -	Gerry Billy	Godenschwager	29 -	Linda Kinser
	Kaitlyn Carpenter	Starr Cummings		

February Anniversaries

5 -	Wayne & Margaret Marx (54)	14 -	Ron & Mary Howard (62)
6 -	David & Elviria Engle (52)	22 -	Chuck & Jane Lawrence (23)
9 -	Jayson & Megan Thorpe (18)		

Sunday Volunteers for February 2026

Position	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22
Cantor	Ruth Gehring	Julie Hippen	Juli Rauch	Dustin Hill
Lector	Kathy Jordan	Addison Laidlaw-Smith	Gerry Billy	Ann Daly
Com. Assistant	Sadie Smith	Kerrill Foster	Mary Billy	Mandy John
Usher	Fred Freytag, Charles Cooperider, Steve Wiersma	Charlie Laidlaw-Smith, Charles Cooperider	Greg Everingham, John Grangaard	Don Miller, Jerry Young, Charles Cooperider
Counters	Fred & Lindsay Freytag, Sally Finck	Kerrill Foster	Sally Finck, Greg & Kim Everingham	Fred & Lindsay Freytag, Don Miller

LOOK FOR THE FORWARD TO BE MAILED OUT ON FEBRUARY 17, 2026.

THE ANNUAL REPORT January 20, 2026
St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
67 North Fifth Street (at Locust)
Newark, OH 43055

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