

THE FORWARD

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
ST. Paul's EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
NEWARK, OHIO JULY 21, 2026



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

Web Site: 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

I came across this article and found it appropriate for our nation's 250th celebration. I have edited it for our space limits. – Pastor Martin

A Brief Theology of the American Flag

Let's start with this: red, white, and blue were (and are) the colors of the British Union Jack, and the earliest American flags had 13 red and white stripes and a Union Jack in the upper left corner, where the stars are today.

But once the American colonists declared independence from that crown, a Union Jack obviously wouldn't do — and so, as the Revolutionary War raged on, the Continental Congress established the Great Seal of the United States and in the process officially spelled out that, apart from the Union Jack, the new nation's red, white, and blue colors stood for three ideals: red stood for *courage*, white stood for *integrity*, and blue stood for *justice*. Courage, integrity, and justice; that's what we're "pledging allegiance" to when we pledge allegiance to our flag, along with the Republic for which it stands.

But there's more going on here. Remember, this is the late-eighteenth century, and these "United States of America" were doing something provocative, something new. They were breaking away, striking out in a different direction. Their new flag, they declared, would serve as a sign that the nation being born would be based on ideals — *not on ethnicity, bloodline, kingship, or kinship*. The government would belong to the *people*, and the nation would be based on ideals the people prized.

Nor would the new nation be based on any particular national origin, clan, or caste. The Union Jack clearly signals England, Scotland, and Ireland, but the American flag does no such thing. Nor would the new nation

be based on any particular religion. Many national European flags featured crosses, including Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Spain, and France, among others. The Union Jack has three crosses: St. George's Cross for England, St. Andrew's Cross for Scotland, and St. Patrick's Cross for Ireland. But the American flag? No cross at all. It's a striking, conspicuous absence. And with all this in mind, it's clear that so-called "Christian nationalism" isn't only a theological contradiction in terms — it's also deeply anti-American, going all the way back to the founding.

Courage, integrity, justice — and no cross. No crescent. No Star of David. No Buddha. No Shiva. Instead, 13 stripes and a constellation of stars representing the community itself. This nation will be built on ideals. We will ground ourselves in them as best we can and strive to live them out. And when we fail, we'll get up and strive again, and again, and again.

Our flag represents our struggle ever since to live up to those ideals, a struggle that has entered a new chapter today. But whenever we catch sight of the American flag, we can remember that bold, world-changing message: no state religion but freedom of religion (or no religion at all), no particular clan or class but a diverse constellation of origins, and no kings or single ethnic identity but rather a community of equals.

We're still working on it, and we've got a ways to go — but that's the vision, that's the goal, there up ahead on the horizon, snapping in the wind: red, white, and blue.

(The entire article can be found at saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog)

God bless you all! Pastor Martin

Please keep the following people in your prayers Immediate:
Cheryl Seabright (Judy's daughter), **Margaret Marx**, **Sam Irwin**,
Goldie Smith (Sadie's relative)

(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 WHEN'S 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.**

- ***Friday Night Game Nights*** – In August we will meet on the 2nd and 3rd Friday at 7 p.m. in Weisgerber Lounge – the 14th and the 21st. Interested? 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*** usually meets the third Monday evening of each month at 7 p.m. in Weisgerber Lounge. In July we will meet on the 27th. In August we will meet on the 17th. The book we will begin in July is "*The Briar Club*" by Kate Quinn.
- ***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 August 12th at 10:00 a.m.*** in Danford Hall.
- ***Church Council will meet August 24th at 7 p.m. (this might change)***
- ***Matthew's Kitchen*** meets on the 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
- ***Grief Group*** meets on the 2nd Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. They meet next on August 12th.

Notes to the Church and Congregation:

ST. PAUL'S REPAIR AND RENOVATION. After receiving estimates from three contractors for all of the work needed, the property committee has voted to engage Durable Restoration for the work. They previously replaced our sacristy roof and the flashing around the tower, solving a long-term leakage problem, and we have faith in their abilities. The estimates from all three (including Precision Slate and S.A.W. Construction) were very similar.

The job will include repairing cracks in the stonework, replacing mortar as needed, anchoring the facing stones to the structure where necessary, and resetting stones that have become loose on the east and west ends of the sanctuary. Some of the lintels at the top of flat-topped windows will need to be refinished or replaced. They will also replace the existing copper gutters on the sanctuary with new, custom-made copper gutters. The sanctuary roof will have matching slates installed as needed.

After speaking with Council, we also decided to replace the existing stone steps at the main entrance to the sanctuary with poured concrete, rather than just replace broken stones. This is added to the estimate. The total for this project will be approximately \$150,000. As stated before, it makes most sense to do the stone, gutter, and roof work at one time to avoid additional expense for lifts and scaffolding. We would like to move forward with this as soon as possible before prices become even higher.

Please look for additional information on meetings and upcoming congregational vote.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF SCHOOL KITS

The summer is rushing by and we'll soon find sales on school supplies. This is the best time to purchase donations for the Lutheran World Relief school kits. We hope to prepare at least 100 kits and will greatly appreciate your contributions of the following items: 70 sheet spiral notebooks (375 needed), 50 pencil sharpeners, 220 blue or black ballpoint pens (not the gel type). Please bring your donations by August 16th. A box will be placed in the front of the walkway to the education building to receive your donations and will have an updated list of what is needed. Monetary donations are also most welcome. Just mark on your offering envelopes "school supplies." Thank you!

******We have enough pencils, crayons, scissors, rulers and erasers left from last year's donations. **Please do not donate backpacks.** We purchase nylon string backpacks in quantity because we have no way of knowing the age of the recipients.*

COMMUNITY PICNIC - Our next community picnic will be held, Sunday, August 2nd right after the 10 o'clock service. Look for signup sheets in the breezeway at church. The next picnic will be held August 30th. In case of inclement weather, we will move the fund indoors to Danford Hall! Look forward to seeing you there!

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!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME to experience the fellowship we offer by joining us in the lobby of the educational building each week. A sign up is available for those who can help provide goodies.

FOOD PANTRY NEWS! The food pantry collection barrel is currently located across from the office. The kids are home from school, so easy to prepare items and ***Any shelf-stable items are needed...Please no clothing items.*** If you wish to give a monetary donation, mark your offering envelope designated to the "Food Pantry".

FROM HOLY TRINITY – "On behalf of the congregation here at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, thank you for your generous donation of \$2328.00 designated for the community drop in ministry. We gratefully acknowledge your gift and look forward to continuing to serve those in need in our Newark and Licking County community. Thanks again and may God's blessings be with you! The funds were raised at our April rummage sale.

AND SPEAKING OF RUMMAGE SALES –Is there any interest in holding a rummage sale in the fall, perhaps specifically for holiday décor? If you are interested, please reach out to Kerrill Foster or Kim Everingham with ideas. Thanks!

August Anniversaries

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 - Kevin & Faith Settles (27) | 19 - Richard & Diana Koch (48) |
| 4 - John & Libby Warnock (53) | 20 - Geoff & Jaye Kaercher (38) |
| 6 - Charlie & Hydi Laidlaw-Smith (33) | 21 - Rick & Tanya Myers (50) |
| 7 - Jim & Jackie Casto (57) | 22 - Bill & Christine Robbins (28) |
| 10 - Doug & Cheryl Fulton (51) | 25 - Marty & Dee Altmaier (53) |
| 13 - Will & Jeri Kennard (59) | Tim & Brenda O'Keefe (42) |
| 14 - Mark & Sally Finck (31) | 26 - Troy & Dixie Dunlap (48) |
| Gregg & Elanna Simpkins (16) | 31 - Michael & Cynthia Petrella (30) |
| 17 - Dave & Gloria Metzger (47) | |

August Birthdays

1 - Linda Wildman	11 - Logan Bragg	Maggie Fuller
2 - Ashley Baker	Aiden Carpenter	Jacob Poston
Cayden Leang	Evan Hodges	
Megan Swisher	12 - Cynthia Flowers	21 - Ashton Hall
3 - Sheila Cline	13 - Laura McDaniel	Jodie Jones
Wayne Marx	Kiera Miller	22 - Melissa Molden
4 - Rose Godenschwager	Ron Wheeler	23- Hannah Watkins
Levi Holloway	Linda Woolard	Karleigh Stotts
Betty George	14 - Jordan Harble	25 - Jackie Sainsbury
5 - Lynn Hostetter	Maggie Harble	26 - Jacob Thorpe
Cheryl Trainor	Katie Miller	27 - Jackie Casto
6 - Susan Wagenheim	16 - Amy Anderson	29 - Dan Campbell
8 - Sadie Smith	17 - Suzanne McElfresh	30 - Jana Hovland
9 - Ellie Crane	18 - Linda Slebodnik	Jack Metcalf
Richard Pound	Carol Wheeler (94)	Tim O'Keefe
Gayla Richmond	19 - Linda Smart (84)	31 - Alexandrina Wolf
10 - Wanda Barrett	20 - Ann Altmaier	

Sunday Volunteers for August 2026

	August 2 Community Picnic	August 9	August 16	August 23	August 30 Community Picnic
Cantor	Kerrill Foster	Julie Rauch	Ruth Gehring	Julie Hippen	Kerrill Foster
Lector	Mark Finck	Cheryl Trainor	Sadie Smith	Jerry Young	Diane Ganz
Com. Assistant	Carol Mumaw	Beth Warner	Greta Blegvad	Mary Billy	Mandy John
Usher	Fred Freytag, Charles Cooperider, Steve Wiersma	Charlie Laidlaw- Smith, Charles Cooperider	Greg Everingham, John Grangaard	Jerry Young, Charles Cooperider	Charles Cooperider,
Counters	Fred & Lindsay Freytag, Sally Finck	Kerrill Foster	Sally Finck, Greg & Kim Everingham	Geoff Kaercher & Don Miller	Diane Ganz, Kerrill Foster

FINANCIAL REPORT

Received 6/7/2026		Year to Date	Attendance
Current	\$ 3,926.00	\$91,988.35	Sat. 4 p.m. 12
Benevolence	<u>115.00</u>	<u>3,037.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>53</u>
Total	\$4,041.00	\$ 95,025.35	Total 65

Received 6/14/2026		Year to Date	Attendance
Current	\$ 1,748.00	\$93,736.35	Sat. 4 p.m. 12
Benevolence	<u>30.00</u>	<u>3,067.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>41</u>
Total	\$1,778.00	\$ 96,803.35	Total 53

Received 6/21/2026		Year to Date	Attendance
Current	\$ 2,333.25	\$96,069.60	Sat. 4 p.m. 9
Benevolence	<u>25.00</u>	<u>3,092.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>38</u>
Total	\$2,358.25	\$ 99,161.60	Total 47

Received 6/28/2026		Year to Date	Attendance
Current	\$ 2,051.00	\$98,120.60	Sat. 4 p.m. 11
Benevolence	<u>300.00</u>	<u>3,392.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>47</u>
Total	\$2,351.00	\$ 101,512.60	Total 58

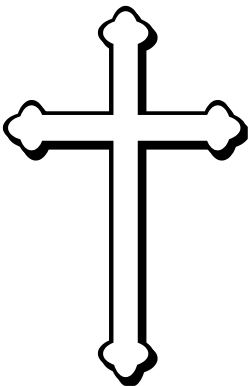
*A donation was made to the 2026 Building Repair Fund by **Sadie Smith**. Thank you Thrivent Choice Members for donating to St. Paul's!*

Year to date operational revenue as of June 30, 2026	\$103,995.08
Year to date operational expenses as of June 30, 2026	<u>132,860.73</u>
Deficit	(\$20,724.18)

THE FORWARD July 21, 2026
St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church
67 North Fifth Street
Newark, OH 43055-5031

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**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."*

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