

THE FORWARD

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

ST. Paul's EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEWARK, OHIO DECEMBER 16, 2025

Church Phone: 740-345-6115 Web Site: <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

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

A God for Here and Now

Is Jesus one with the Father, of the same substance as the Father, or subordinate to the Father? Was Jesus made, born, or emanated? Is the trinity co-equal or hierarchical? Is heaven a place or a condition? All contentious debates in the history of the church.

And we are still getting worked up about such hypothetical questions. Is God against gender transition? Is it Okay to pray to Mary? Should everyone be allowed to take communion? Such questions are, to quote Paul Simon, “questions for the angels.” We may learn the answers someday in heaven (will we go to heaven?) but what about now? A God futzing in heaven over the mysteries of the universe doesn’t do us mortals much good. We are flesh and bone pilgrims wandering through a dusty world. We need a god who concerns him/her/it-self with this place and this time.

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. More importantly, it celebrates the incarnation. God becomes *one of us*. God is born. God laughs, weeps, hungers and thirsts. God rejoices, grows weary, despairs, suffers, and dies like us. But it is not enough that God becomes human. God becomes human *for* humans. Jesus feeds those around him who are hungry *now*; heals those who are sick *now*, reaches out to the scarred and battered and lonely and despairing, not in some glorious future, but in the cold, confused, and conflicted *now*. This is not some hypothetical or transcendent god. This is the God of our hear and now. This is the God we need. This is *our* God.

Merry Christmas to you all! Pastor Martin

Please keep the following people in your prayers
Immediate: *Lauren Everingham* (Kim & Greg's granddaughter), *Lori Donahue* (Sally Stevenson), *Kristen McMillion* (Jean Hovland's daughter), *Ann Robertson* (Kerrill Foster's sister-in-law).



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.

SERVICES CHRISTMAS EVE: *Christmas Eve is Wednesday December 24th. There will be two services, one at 4 p.m. and the Christ Mass will begin at 10 p.m. Volunteers are needed for both services. Please see below. If you can help, please contact the church office or look for the sign-up sheet at the back of the church.*

The Christmas Eve Services December 24th Volunteers Needed!

4 p.m. Ushers (2) Lector (1) Communion Assistants (2) Bell Ringer (1)

10: 00 p.m. Ushers (4) Lector (2) Bell Ringer (1) Light Luminaries (2) Greeters (2)

- ***Decorating the church for the Christ Mass*** will take place immediately following the church service Sunday December 21st. Everyone is invited to participate!

- **Friday Night Game Night – Game Night happens on the first and third Fridays of the month.** We will NOT meet December 19th. Please join us on January 2nd & 16th 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 December is *Happiness Falls* by Angie Kim. In January we will read *The Women* by Kristin Hannah.
- **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 January 14th at 10:00 a.m.** in Danford Hall.
- **Church Council will meet December 29th and January 26th at 7 p.m.**
- **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 January 14th.
- **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:

COMMUNITY DROP IN CENTER – AN OPPORTUNITY Over the past few months, the leadership of St. Paul's has been in conversation with that of Holy Trinity, exploring the possibility of cooperating in ministry to the growing unhoused population in Newark. Holy Trinity currently provides a weekday Drop-In ministry offering meals, clothing, phone charging, a social setting, and occasional health care. They also offer a Warming Center for winter nights when temperatures drop to dangerous levels.

We see an opportunity for cooperation in that these ministries are quickly outgrowing the available space at Holy Trinity, and St. Paul's currently has a

large amount of well-suited unused space. St. Paul's's downtown location makes us an ideal site. The Drop-In Center, open from 9:30am-4pm, Monday-Friday, would make use of Danford Hall, the kitchen, main floor bathrooms, and the library (for use as a food bank). The nighttime Warming Center, activated only when the temperature drops to 10 degrees or lower, would house women and families in the upstairs education rooms, and men in Danford Hall.

Holy Trinity's current operation of these programs has been supported by a countywide network of volunteers, donations, and grants, and this support would also be applied to any efforts at St. Paul's.

After exploring the possibilities, our two councils now feel ready to bring this to our respective congregations for consideration and input. In the coming weeks you will be hearing more with opportunities to ask questions and discuss.

In January we will be voting to approve looking into the possibility of hosting this ministry in our space in conjunction with Holy Trinity.

URGENT NEED FOR FOOD PANTRY ITEMS! With no food stamp benefits being made available by the federal government, our local food pantry has seen a HUGE increase in need. ***Any shelf-stable items are needed...especially peanut butter.*** Items that can be made without the addition of milk or dairy, like; 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".

Nominees for the 2026 Congregation Council: The council has 9 members and members are elected on a rotating basis. For this election there are open places for men and for women. Please look for biographies in upcoming bulletins. If you are willing to serve, please contact Jerry Young.

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 Nov. 24, 2025

Present: Sally Finck, Mary Billy, John Grangaard, Julie Ingram, Jim Rengert, Greta Blegvad, Jerry Depalmo, Jerry Young, Pastor Martin

- Minutes passed.
 - Requested that when praying for someone in the bulletin, their connection to the congregation be included in the bulletin.
 - Suggested we invite Rev. Deb Dingus and anyone else available to answer question regarding working with Holy Trinity.
 - Pastor's Report: Agreed to ask Deb Dingus and Donna to come for information meeting after worship.
 - Rental Property Report: Presented by Jim Rengert and accepted.
 - Congregation Care Report: Read and accepted
 - No Property Report
 - Next meetings: December 29 (May be cancelled due to holidays), January 26
- Respectfully submitted, Martin Gehring

Sunday Volunteers for January 2026

	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
Cantor	Juli Rauch	Dustin Hill	Ruth Gehring	Julie Hippen
Lector	Mark Finck	Kerrill Foster	Elizabeth Kleinknecht	Jon Minard
Com. Assistant	Mary Billy	Addison Laidlaw-Smith	Greta Blegvad	Mandy John
Usher	Fred Freytag, Charles Cooperider, Steve Wiersma	Charlie Laidlaw-Smith, Charles Cooperider	Greg Everingham John Grangaard	Jerry Young, Charles Cooperider
Counter s	Fred & Lindsay Freytag, Sally Finck	Kerrill Foster	Sally Finck, Greg & Kim Everingham	Geoff Kaercher & Don Miller

January Anniversaries

1 - David & Marilyn Doll (56)
 Andrew & Courtney Swisher (12)
 2- Martin & Ruth Gehring (38)

12 - Ken & Kelly Green (41)
 14 - Donald & Katie Miller (60)
 18 - Corey & Brooke Love (23)

January Birthdays

1 - Brin Fulton Chuck King	Ian Jordan Hydi Laidlaw-Smith	19 - Ron Howard
2 - Carmella Holman Jean Hovland (84) Sofia Swisher-Morris	12 - Larissa Fuller Lyric Wilson	21 - Crystal Stamper Samantha Woolard
3 - David Graham Christian Thacher	13 - Al Miller	22 - Kira Coad-Pope Adam Hall
4 - Caroline King	14 - Harry Simon	23 - Johanna Hartfield Belinda Seabright
5 - John A. Jordan	15 - Rachel Freytag Cox Bradley Pastorius Olivia Pastorius	24 - Carol Sunkle (97)
8 - Chance Settles	16 - Sam Irvin	27 - Reece Dupler
10 - Linda Crawmer Ariel Hall	17 - April Frazee	28 - Tim Grigsby Faith Settles
	18 - Aidan Fraley	31 - Diane Ganz

FINANCIAL REPORT

Received 11/2/2025		Year to Date	Attendance	
Current	\$ 4,249.00	\$160,277.18	Sat. 4 p.m.	15
Benevolence	<u>175.00</u>	<u>4,455.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m.	<u>52</u>
Total	\$4,424.00	\$ 164,732.18	Total	67
Received 11/9/2025		Year to Date	Attendance	
Current	\$ 3,620.00	\$163,897.18	Sat. 4 p.m.	11
Benevolence	<u>15.00</u>	<u>4,470.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m.	<u>56</u>
Total	\$3,635.00	\$ 168,367.18	Total	67
Received 11/16/2025		Year to Date	Attendance	
Current	\$ 3,345.00	\$167,242.18	Sat. 4 p.m.	13
Benevolence	<u>325.00</u>	<u>4,795.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m.	<u>44</u>
Total	\$3,670.00	\$ 172,037.18	Total	57
Received 11/23/2025		Year to Date	Attendance	
Current	\$ 5,161.08	\$172,403.26	Sat. 4 p.m.	12
Benevolence	<u>15.00</u>	<u>4,810.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m.	<u>47</u>
Total	\$5,176.08	\$ 177,213.26	Total	59

Received 11/30/2025		Year to Date		Attendance	
Current	\$ 7,551.00		\$179,954.26	Sat. 4 p.m.	11
Benevolence	<u>268.00</u>		<u>5,078.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m.	<u>51</u>
Total	\$7,819.00		\$ 185,032.26	Total	62

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

Year to date operational revenue as of November 30, 2025	\$187,073.38
Year to date operational expenses as of November 30, 2025	<u>227,730.46</u>
Deficit	(\$40,657.08)

Members and Friends of St. Paul's,

At this time of year, it has been our custom here at St. Paul's to offer our congregation the opportunity to give a monetary Christmas gift to the members of our church staff including our Pastor, Choir Director, Organist, Secretary, Financial Secretary and Janitors. If you are interested in participating this year, please make your check out to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and mail it to the church office to the attention of the Treasurer. Please indicate how you wish for your gift to be distributed.

The gift will be presented at the Christmas Eve services. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 360-689-9784 or e-mail me at mandyjerry@aol.com.

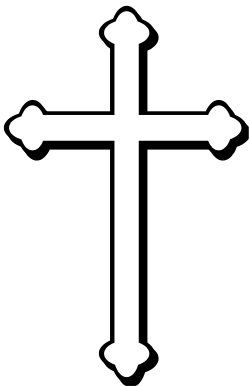
Grace and peace to all of you in this season of waiting and reflection,
Jerry Young, Congregation Council President

THE FORWARD December 16, 2025
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."*