

# THE FORWARD

## THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. Paul's EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

NEWARK, OHIO    AUGUST 19, 2025

Church Phone: 740-345-6115    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

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)

## A Christian Nation?

Wikipedia says, “Christian nationalism … focuses on promoting the Christian views of its followers in order to achieve prominence or dominance in political, cultural, and social life.” As a pastor, I do not object to promoting Christian views, but I strongly object to doing so with an aim to dominance. *Jesus never sought dominance.* He repeatedly slipped away when people sought to crown him king. He chastised his followers when they tried to fight for him. He neither claimed nor sought any form of earthly kingdom. He opened the borders of God’s heavenly kingdom to people of other nations and beliefs: Samaritans, Syrophoenicians, Ethiopians, Greeks, and Romans. He did not push his own beliefs, but rather invited others to “come and see.” When he was ridiculed, persecuted, arrested, and even killed, he did not seek retribution but remained silent, allowing his words and actions to be his only witness. And it was this witness that inspired the fledgling church such that the more persecution it endured, the faster it grew. It was only when Christianity was embraced by the Roman empire (for political rather than religious reasons) that the church began to embrace the tools of empire, using legislation and violence for its own ends, armies becoming tools of evangelism and the cross a symbol of domination.

Since the decline of the Roman empire and the imperialistic church it fostered, there have always been those who sought to resurrect a nationalistic church as a political tool of domination, the most infamous being the alliance of the German Lutheran church to the Nazi state in the 1930s and 40s. This shameful history has made today’s Lutheran church all

the more vigilant against any such repeat of Christian nationalism.

Today ultra-conservative evangelicals, Christian Zionists, white supremacists, and ultra-nationalists are once again seeking to enshrine Christianity in a privileged position and use it as a tool of domination over others with views differing from their own. In response, Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America wrote, "Christian Nationalism is a perversion of the gospel and a threat to democracy. It's precisely because I love my country that I warn against it."

I am proud to be an American, but like Jesus before me, I continue to believe that God's kingdom is not of this world. When God's Kingdom *is* finally realized, at a time Jesus insisted we can never know, all nations, our own included, will dissolve into the one diverse, unbounded, all-inclusive unity of God's love. Until that time, in the name of the one who adopted the title of *servant* rather than *king*, we must never again allow any would-be kings to distort Christianity into a political tool of domination.

God bless you all, Pastor Martin

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

**Immediate: Tim Wiley, Brian Finck, Cheryl Seabright, Fay Molina, Julie Covington**

*(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 WHERES – 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.**

- ***Another Friday Night Game Night*** –Beginning in September, Game Night will happen on the first and third Fridays of the month. Come join us on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in Weisgerber Lounge! Bring your fav orite 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 August is *The Inquisitor's Key* by Jefferson Bass.
- ***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 September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in Danford Hall.
- ***Church Council*** will meet September 22<sup>nd</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 September 10<sup>th</sup>.
- ***Crafts & Sewing Group*** usually meets the first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. in Danford Hall. **They will next meet on September 6<sup>th</sup>.** Please contact Connie Baker, 740-334-8961 if you have any questions.

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

**COMMUNITY PICNIC** - Our first and second community picnics were a great success! Look for signup sheets in the breezeway at church for the next picnic which will be held August 24<sup>th</sup>. In case of inclement weather, we will move the fun 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. **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”.

**ARE YOU GRIEVING THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE?** – The Grief Group meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays at 1:30 in Danford Hall. If you would like more information, please contact Jean Hovland. The group **meets next on September 10<sup>th</sup>.**

## September Birthdays

2- Ryan Wiersma	15- Mitzi Findo	22- Jane Lawrence
4 - Gail Grigsby	Patricia Fuller	Susan Shannon(84)
8 - John F. Jordan	16- Gavin Bragg	Jennifer Swisher
9 - Beth Hodges	18- Jonathan Casto	23- Joyln Carpenter
Ryleigh Jones	David Engle	24- P. J. Billy
Becky Kolb	Sharon Grigsby	Penny Coleman
Briana Simon	William Hall	26- Gary Walters
Joyce Woolard	James Harble	Jerry Young
11- Beth Ossa	19- Sarah Davis	27- Mark Eastman
12 -Mathew Seabright	Lynn Heatwole	Jim Kolb
Ben Stamper	20- Heidi Bragg	Carol Mumaw
14- Connie Baker	Mark Finck	28- Marilyn Doll
Vicki Owen	Michelle Miller	30- Erik Ganz
		Tyler Triplett

## September Anniversaries

2- Chuck & Donna King (25)	9- John & Loretta McCollum (53)
Steve & Christine Wiersma (53)	17- Matt Rauch & Julie Datko (20)
4- Thomas & Erin (Daly) Zinn (15)	24- Harry & Tambda Simon (31)
5- Paul & Sharon Harble (66)	27- Gail & Sharon Grigsby (58)
6- Jens & Greta Blegvad (37)	

## Sunday Volunteers for September 2025

	September 7	September 14	September 21 Picnic	September 28
<b>Cantor</b>	Juli Rauch	Dustin Hill	Ruth Gehring	Julie Hippen
<b>Lector</b>	Anne Daly	Addison Laidlaw-Smith	Mark Finck	Gerry Billy
<b>Com. Assistant</b>	Carol Mumaw	Kerrill Foster	Greta Blegvad	Mary Billy
<b>Usher</b>	Fred Freytag, Charles Cooperider, Steve Wiersma	Charlie Laidlaw-Smith, Charles Cooperider	Greg Everingham John Grangaard	Jerry Young, Charles Cooperider
<b>Counters</b>	Fred & Lindsay Freytag, Sally Finck	Kerrill Foster	Sally Finck, Greg & Kim Everingham	Geoff Kaercher & Don Miller

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Received 7/6/2025	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 2,565.00	\$100,890.83	Sat. 4 p.m. 13
Benevolence <u>35.00</u>	<u>2,314.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>40</u>
Total \$ 2,600.00	\$ 103,204.83	Total <u>53</u>
Received 7/13/2025	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 9,052.00	\$109,942.83	Sat. 4 p.m. 10
Benevolence <u>403.00</u>	<u>2,717.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>41</u>
Total \$ 9,455.00	\$ 112,659.83	Total <u>51</u>
Received 7/20/2025	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 1,024.00	\$110,966.83	Sat. 4 p.m. 13
Benevolence <u>5.00</u>	<u>2,722.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>43</u>
Total \$ 1,029.00	\$ 113,688.83	Total <u>56</u>
Received 7/27/2025	Year to Date	Attendance
Current \$ 7,323.00	\$118,289.83	Sat. 4 p.m. 16
Benevolence <u>285.00</u>	<u>3,007.00</u>	Sun. 10 a.m. <u>45</u>
Total \$ 7,608.00	\$ 121,296.83	Total <u>61</u>

*A donation was made to the Choir Fund by Dee and Marty Altmaier in memory of Terry Nelson.*

<b>Year to date operational revenue as of July 31, 2025</b>	<b>\$124,140.15</b>
<b>Year to date operational expenses as of July 31, 2025</b>	<b><u>153,383.62</u></b>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b><u>(\$29,243.47)</u></b>

# *Back to School!*

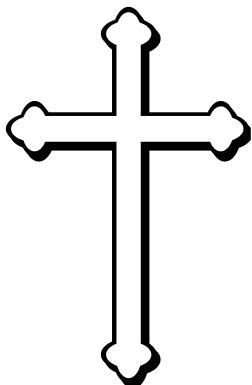


THE FORWARD August 19, 2025

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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