



# The Epistle

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 117 East Arch Street, Fleetwood, PA

## From the Pastor

July 2026

### *A Prayer for Seniors (and people of any age)*

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With that vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it at all...but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details...give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others, but help me to endure them with patience. I dare not ask for improved memory but a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when *my* memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken. Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint, some of them are so hard to live with, but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. Give me the grace to tell them so. Amen.

I will pray this every morning in our new home at The Heritage. I will also pray for you.

In Christ, Pastor Susan Fox

### Up Coming Events

**Cookies at the Cross - 9:30 a.m.**  
Sundays through the summer

**Special Music - 8:30 a.m.**  
Sunday Summer Services

# July

May this July bring endless moments  
of happiness, laughter, and bright  
days filled with positivity that light  
up your life.

# Council Corner

## **Presentation:**

- Information about the Youth & Family ministry candidate.

## **Parish Administrator's Report**

- Corey's Flooring will be installing new carpeting at the parking lot entrance in July.

## **Treasurer's Report**

- For the month of May, we were ahead by \$1,268, and year to date income exceeded expenses by \$10,679.

## **Interview:**

- A candidate for the Youth & Family Ministry position was invited to the council meeting. Introductions were made.
- The candidate has extensive experience in music and children's ministry. A motion was made and approved to offer the candidate the job.


## **Pastor's Report**

- Highlight of the month was attending the synod assembly.
- The process of electing a bishop was most interesting and the worship experiences were inspiring. And serving with our delegates Donna Fick and Ken Sanders was a pleasure.
- A deep sadness in the sudden death of a preschool student. Pastor and the preschool staff offered the family support.
- A joyous event was the Affirmation of Faith by Natalie Holly and Bronson Wyland.
- Pastor Fox concludes here  $\frac{3}{4}$  time ministry at the end of June. She prays that God has worked through all of us to forward his kingdom on earth.

## **Church Council Report**

- 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration – Carol Cox is organizing walkers and the tailgate.
- Bronson Wyland is doing his Eagle Scout project for the church, painting the preschool entrance.

*(Continued on page 4)*



(Continued from page 3)

**Preschool**

- Preschool Summer camps – had 23 students for the first camp and 24 students for the second camp.
- Rockland Signs is designing a new sign.
- 54 students are enrolled for the fall.

**Learning:**

- VBS is August 2 through 6, shared with St. Paul's UCC, Maidencreek Church and Frieden's UCC.

**Service & Social Ministry:**

- One application was received for the scholarship which will be awarded July 19.

**Worship & Music:**

- Donna Ahrens has special music planned throughout the summer.
- Plans for starting a praise choir in the fall.

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**Pastor Fox!**

Thank you so much for your dedicated service to St. Paul's. We truly appreciate the time, energy, and heart you pour into our congregation. Your messages and steadfast support have been a blessing to all of us. We are so grateful to have you as part of our church family.

With deep appreciation,  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church





*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."* Hebrews 13:16



Let us hunt ways to honor our wounded veterans Volunteer at a VA hospital or home. Fly the flag to honor vets who fought for our free-

dom. Invite a lonesome vet for dinner. Include vets when caroling and show support with a birthday or Christmas card. or mail a holiday package. Thank the veterans.

**Skin Cancer Prevention:**



Early symptoms might be a new spot on the skin, a shiny bump on the skin or rough, red patch that feels dry or scaly, a spot that itches or

hurts. Others include a sore that does not heal, a raised bump with a center that bleeds or forms a scab, a bump that looks like a wart or a mole that changes quickly or one that features uneven edges or colors.

Suffering just five sunburns over your lifetime more than doubles your chances of developing melanoma. Suntans damage the skin's DNA and age it before its time. Also, the skin undergoes changes that reduce defenses against disease and healing.

Use sunscreen, avoid being outside during sun when it is at its peak, typically 10 am to 4 pm. Seek shade if you must be outside. Have a yearly dermatology check.

**KUDOS**

Taylor Schlegel, an Oley High School senior, and two other students won a state-wide competition featuring mental health, sponsored by HOSA. (Health Occupations Students of America). at Hershey, PA. The competition continued at Indianapolis in June. Congratulations Taylor and her friends.

# Mystery Members

Submitted by Meliss!Neff

Please note that there will not be a mystery member this month. We are taking a short break!



# Prayer List

## Prayer List

**The prayer list** is an instrument to remind us of our responsibility to intercessory prayer for our community, world, and church. To add a name to the prayer list, call the church office. Names will be removed after four weeks, unless otherwise advised. Prayer makes a difference!

**Pray for those serving in the military:** Connor Geer, Rob Geer, Daniel Keller, Brayden Kiebach, Travis Meck, Lauren Moyer, Sydney Plucker, Matt Roberts.

### Pray for those in need of ongoing, long-term prayer:

Kathy Boalton, Marion Boyer, Gene Delp, Essie Dietrich, Lynnwood Fegley, Joanne Fink, Frank Vroman, Nancy Heffner, Maya Hein, Juanita Heist, Jane Hill, Gino Hinnershitz, Rexine Krause, Martin Keller, Don Kirby, Sharon Kirkhoff, Betty Kurzweg, Finn Messick and Family, Steve Miller, The Neff Family, Ruth Oxenreider, Mike Perkins, Charles Pinter, Bruce Rimmel, Ken Schlegel, Lori Spatz, Mabel Stopp, Dan Troxel, Daisy Wahl, Russell Wendt, Marie Wessner.



### A Note about Pastoral Care



Please contact us if you or another member of your family enters the hospital or experiences a significant illness, trauma, or need. Pr. Marty Milne can be reached through the church or at 484 505-0987 or by email to: [mamilne@gmail.com](mailto:mamilne@gmail.com)

A reminder to please call the church office with any hospital admission, as only Tower Health Hospital notifies our church office and only if St. Paul's Lutheran Church is listed at time of admission.



# July Worship

## July 5 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

The mystery of God’s ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God’s mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ’s invitation: “Come to me, all you that are weary.” Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

## July 12 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost



God’s word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord’s table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

## July 19 – Eight Sunday after Pentecost

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord’s table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

## July 26 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today’s gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God’s reign, the great surprise is that God’s grace finds us first!



## Food Collections are ongoing!



Now more than ever, food insecurity is a problem throughout our nation and world and in our community. Kindly remember the many families and individuals who are struggling to afford food. Simply drop your non-perishable donations in the food bin in the lobby.



## Celebrating Weddings

### *To Have and to Hold*



*In July we are celebrating weddings. Whether you were married last year, in the last decade or the last century, we hope you'll share your wedding photos with us.*

*All photos are welcome whether you are currently married, widowed, or divorced. Bring a wedding album or a photo. Place it on a windowsill and write your name and the year that you were married. Keep your photo there for one week or all three weeks in July.*

*We'll accept photos on July 12, 19, or 26. Please take your photo home with you after the July 26th service.*

*Together, let's celebrate weddings and how God blesses each union--for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health.*



## Special Monthly Offering The Potato Project

A unique, Christian ministry outreach program, we have supported The Potato Project for many years. The Potato Project seeks to address local hunger issues through a collection of volunteers who grow, tend, and harvest locally grown produce for our hungry neighbors in need. Our July monthly offering will go towards continuing this work.

- \* April's offering for Bear Creek Camp collected \$722.
- \* May's offering for Habitat for Humanity collected \$645.
- \* Walnuttown Fire Company special offering collected \$568.



Dear Friends of St. Paul's,

As I look at the world, I know what is needed is more of what camp has to offer – Time in positive community, connection with nature, and a place to be authentically surrounded by God's love. Your generous spirit ensures that these meaningful and necessary impacts will be shared with campers, summer staff, and guests of all ages this summer and beyond.

Thank you for your partnership!

Colin Grooms – Executive Director, Bear Creek Camp

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## VBS 2026



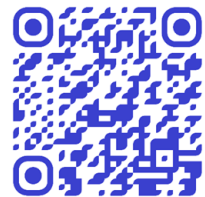
Join us for the Snowball Mountain Challenge! God's children ages 3 (potty-trained) through grade 6 are invited to attend as we explore how we can do all things with God. Kids will become Challengers, gearing up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith.

This year's VBS will be combined with Maidencreek Church, St. Paul's UCC, St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Frieden's UCC, Oley. VBS will take place August 2–6 from 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. at Maier's Grove. A meal will be served each night beginning at 5:15 p.m.

Use the QR code to register. Register by July 5 to guarantee a T-shirt.

For questions, contact Carol Cox at [carolc314@gmail.com](mailto:carolc314@gmail.com).

Meals Served at 5:15pm



## VBS Volunteers Needed

It takes many people to make VBS a success. VBS will be held August 2–6 from 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m. at Maier's Grove, as we team up with Maidencreek Church, St. Paul's UCC, and Frieden's UCC. A meal will be served each evening beginning at 5:15 p.m.. Our church is responsible for providing food servers for Wednesday night's meal (food helpers should arrive by 4:00 p.m.). If you are interested in volunteering to serve the meal on Wednesday or help during VBS each evening, please email Carol Cox at [carolc314@gmail.com](mailto:carolc314@gmail.com) by July 1 to guarantee yourself a T-shirt. We are looking for several youth helpers to lead a group of children each evening.

# Finances at St. Paul's



Did you know that you can now manage your giving to St. Paul's online? Simply Giving is an easy, secure, and convenient way to have your weekly, monthly, or yearly offering transferred directly to St. Paul's from your checking or savings account. No more writing checks and searching for that offering envelope. It just takes a few minutes to enroll and you are on your way to Simply Giving! Enrollment forms are available in the church office or visit

[www.spelcfleetwood.com\give-online](http://www.spelcfleetwood.com\give-online)

MAY 2026	<u>May-26</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Actual</u>
<b>Income</b>		
Non-Preschool M&M	\$ 14,276	\$ 96,188
Preschool M&M	\$ 16,790	\$ 60,470
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 31,066</b>	<b>\$ 156,658</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Non-Preschool	\$ 17,802	\$ 93,358
Preschool	\$ 11,995	\$ 52,622
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 29,797</b>	<b>\$ 145,980</b>
Income Less Expenses - Non-Preschool	\$ (3,527)	\$ 2,831
Income Less Expenses - Preschool	\$ 4,795	\$ 7,848
<b>Total Income Less Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,268</b>	<b>\$ 10,679</b>

## Making a Difference with Your RMD Supporting St. Paul's Ministry

Members have asked how they can be intentional in their financial stewardship—especially when it comes to Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). We're pleased to share that **you can now set up your RMDs electronically** to support St. Paul's Lutheran Church with ease and consistency.

Whether you choose **monthly, quarterly, or annual withdrawals**, your RMD can be directed straight from your retirement account to St. Paul's. This method not only fulfills your IRS requirement but also helps sustain the vital work we do—sharing Christ's love through worship, outreach, education, and service.

Your faithful giving ensures we can continue to nurture disciples, care for our community, and grow ministries that reflect God's grace and justice.

**To get started or learn more, please contact Linda Coutts.** She is happy to help you set up an arrangement that works best for you.

# Thrivent Choice Dollars



Thrivent Choice® has introduced exciting updates that simplify the program and give more clients with membership the opportunity to support the organizations and causes they care about. Here's what's new:

## **One Annual Designation.**

In mid-April, Choice Dollars® were designated up front as a single annual lump sum. Members can now direct their full amount anytime between now and year-end. Pro tip: Don't wait until December 31-direct today!

Never directed before? To learn more, visit [thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://thrivent.com/thriventchoice).

The heart of the program remains the same: Members continue to have a voice in where millions of dollars in grant funding go each year-strengthening causes, congregations and communities nationwide. To explore the latest updates, visit [thriventchoice.com/upgrades](http://thriventchoice.com/upgrades).

## Where will you find God in the Summertime?



The summer invites us to enjoy longer and warmer days with friends, family, nature and always God's presence.

Where did you see God in the natural world? His truth of his beauty and goodness? A walk in the woods, on a beach or even on the city streets, a sunrise, a sunset, a thunder storm, or the vast sky full of stars?

Did you see God's love in your family? Children playing, a baby sleeping, a family picnic or vacation.

Whatever you do this summer, remember God, the Creator, invented summer and enjoy His spiritual invitation to take time to Breathe, Step Outside, See and Hear, Taste and Smell, and Delight!

You are invited to share these experiences with your church family.

*Gretchen Mertz*  
*Editor*

# St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church



117 East Arch Street  
Fleetwood, PA 19522  
(610) 944-8388

## Office Hours:

Monday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. to Noon (for the summer)

Wednesday & Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



## Purpose

*Filled with the Holy Spirit*

*We inspire Spiritual Growth in the Community of Christ  
by striving to ...*

## Guiding Principles

- ◆ *Welcome All People*
- ◆ *Pray Daily*
- ◆ *Worship Weekly*
- ◆ *Read, Listen, Reflect and Share the Word of God*
- ◆ *Serve at and beyond St. Paul's*
- ◆ *Encourage Spiritual Friendships*
- ◆ *Share God's Blessings Generously through the Giving of Our Time, Talents and Resources*

## Contact Us

### Gretchen Mertz

Parish Administrator 610-944-8388

Email: [office@spelcfleetwood.com](mailto:office@spelcfleetwood.com)

### Pastor

Pastor 610-944-8388

Email: [Pastor@spelcfleetwood.com](mailto:Pastor@spelcfleetwood.com)

### Linda Coutts

Treasurer 610-944-8488

### Sue Rimmel

Financial Secretary 610-944-8388

### Donna Ahrens

Organist, Interim Choir Director

Director of Handbells 610-944-8388

### Carol Cox

Sunday School Director 610-944-8388

### Gretchen Mertz

Epistle Editor 610-944-6492

Email: [gkm321@ptd.net](mailto:gkm321@ptd.net)

### Jenn Davies, Director

Preschool 610-944-0922

### Phone:

610-944-8388

### Fax:

610-944-3011

### Email:

[office@spelcfleetwood.com](mailto:office@spelcfleetwood.com)

### Website:

[www.spelcfleetwood.com](http://www.spelcfleetwood.com)

### Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/spelcfleetwood](http://www.facebook.com/spelcfleetwood)

### Church Office Hours:


*Please check the weekly bulletin and the sign on the parking lot door.*

You are welcome to call with questions or concerns or to stop in to discuss your needs in person. Please ring the doorbell and Gretchen will meet you at the door for admittance into the building.

### Editor's Note:

All articles, announcements etc. should be emailed to Gretchen Mertz (Editor) at [gkm321@ptd.net](mailto:gkm321@ptd.net) or [office@spelcfleetwood.com](mailto:office@spelcfleetwood.com) or hard copies put in her mailbox in the choir room/library  
Thank you, Gretchen Mertz

# July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 
5	6	7	8	9 7:15 pm Cultural Series Mtg	10	11
12 9:45 am W&M Mtg	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Epistle Deadline	21 6:30 pm Council Mtg	22	23	24	25
26 Food on the 4th	27 8 am Corey's Flooring	28 8 am Corey's Flooring	29 8 am Corey's Flooring	30	31	

**NOTE:** AA/AI-non Meet every Sunday at 7 PM

# Doug Anderson & Justified Quartet In Concert

**Sunday, October 11 at 3:00 pm**  
**Doors open at 2:00 pm**

**St Paul's Lutheran Church**  
**117 East Arch Street**  
**Fleetwood, PA 19522**



## Tickets

**\$20 in advance \$22 at the door**

**\$8 Children 5 – 12**

**For tickets call:**

**Sharon Neff 610-657-8727 or**

**Liz Hess 717-669-1785 (credit card accepted with a \$2 processing fee)**

# Stay Connected!

Keeping your records at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church (117 East Arch Street, Fleetwood, PA 19522) ensures you receive your annual tax statements and stay connected to church events. never miss out on important church or community event, giving statements, or pastoral care. Updating your information only takes a few minutes and helps you stay connected.

## Whether you contact the office or submit a connection card:

Please Provide your **full name** and your **address, phone, email address**, and your preferred communication format digital/email or hard copy mailed for items like the church newsletter.

Promptly reporting these changes guarantees you receive your annual contribution statements for tax purposes and stay informed about church events.

## Church Connection Card

Family Last Name _____	
Adult Name(s) _____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
Children's Name(s) _____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
_____	Birthdate _____
Address _____	
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____	
Family Phone # _____	*Allow txt msg ___ Y ___ N
Family Email _____	*Allow email ___ Y ___ N
Phone (each person) _____	*Allow txt msg ___ Y ___ N
_____	*Allow txt msg ___ Y ___ N
_____	*Allow txt msg ___ Y ___ N
_____	*Allow txt msg ___ Y ___ N
Email (each person) _____	*Allow email ___ Y ___ N
_____	*Allow email ___ Y ___ N
_____	*Allow email ___ Y ___ N
_____	*Allow email ___ Y ___ N
Anniversary _____	

*\*From time to time we may send texts or emails to you from the church with news for upcoming events. If you do not wish to receive them, please indicate next to each phone or email listed.*