

The Messenger



Monthly publication of St. Paul Lutheran Church
& Early Childhood Learning Center

JULY 2025

Greetings St. Paul Lutheran Church!

Happy July! When I think of July I think of Independence Day. I remember going to the 4th of July parade in my hometown with my family. My grandpa was a veteran, and I remember him teaching me to stand up and take off my hat when the American flag came by. I really started to get into and doing it every time an American flag came by no matter how big or little it was. I think at one point he had to say, to do it for only when the bigger flags came by, not every car in the parade with a small flag. I was very proud to do that little act to show that I respected, not only what our servicemen and women did for our country, but also to understand how to take pride in our country.

I also grew up a Christian. I followed Jesus' teachings and I often saw Jesus' teachings connected with how we as a country acted. There were rules and laws to keep us safe. We tended to take care of one another. We treated others how you want to be treated. I grew up in a way that to me Christianity was synonymous with being patriotic and vice versa. I understood the founding of our nation was based on Christian principles with the freedom to practice religion however we wanted. I was Lutheran, my grandpa was a Catholic, my baseball coach was part of the Assemblies of God; yep, we can be whatever we want to be. And we all stood and took our hats off as the flag went by at the parade.

Then I went to seminary. Seminary is known for taking what we think of as facts and making us look at them closely to see if they really are facts or just firmly held beliefs that may or may not be true. I remember in one of my papers I wrote that the United States was founded on Christianity and my professor wrote, "was it?". I assumed it was. I always heard that. I knew the nation was founded on religious freedom but I always understood it to mean whatever Christian denomination one wanted to practice. When my professor questioned what I thought was a basic fact, I started to do research. And I was seriously dumbfounded to find out that our nation was founded by, yes Christians, but also Deists (people who believe in God but not necessarily Jesus). The idea of freedom of religion was the idea to be able to practice any form of religion (Christian or not) or no religion. No form of religion would be forced upon anyone. That's what we were founded on. It kind of blew my mind. I didn't really know what to do with that information at first, but as I continued to wrestle with it, it actually deepened my faith and patriotism.

I could now claim both Christianity and patriotism for our country without combining them. So when I saw something that my country does that doesn't align with teachings of Jesus, I can understand why. They don't have to be one and the same. And I can still sing patriotic songs in worship. On July 6 we will have a patriotic service. It's one of my favorites throughout the year. I love being able to be free to sing "God bless America" but also be free to sing "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies" where it says, "May God thy gold refine, till all success be nobleness and every gain divine" and "God mend thine every flaw, confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law." We have freedom to be able to say our nation isn't perfect and ask for God's help in creating it to be the nation we want it to be.

PrAshley's article continued on pg. 4.

WhatsInside

Pg. 2 June Council Report
Pg. 3 ECLC News
Pg. 4 President's Corner/Cont. Article
Pg. 5 Faith Opportunities
Pg. 6 What an Honor

Pg. 7 July/Fantasy Football
Pg. 8 SURE/Alta Vista Gift Cards
Pg. 9 Birthdays/Celebrations
Pg. 10 Calendar of Events
Pg. 11 Prayer Requests

June Council Report

The Executive Team approved Sandy Tull as one of the two Mid-Gulf Gathering Representatives.

Worship and Music moved to change mid-week services due to reduced attendance for:

- Advent 2025 - suspend the midweek Advent worship services except for Blue Christmas.
- Lent 2026 - keep services on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday and suspend the other mid-week services on the Wednesdays of Lent.

Council approved the Capital Fund outlay for the Fellowship Hall roof repair and shingle treatment in the amount of \$24,303.22. Council also approved the Capital Fund outlay for 2 air conditioning units for the Education Building in the amount of \$18,464.00.



Message from the Church Office

Pastor Ashley and the Parish Administrator will never email or text you asking for donations of money or gift cards.

Please ignore these scammers. You should always contact the church office if you are not sure.

The Messenger is the newsletter of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

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St. Paul Lutheran Church is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA.

Pastor: Rev. Ashley Nicolls

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Donald J. Hillerich

Executive Committee

JoAnn Jordan, President
Judy Roberts, Vice President
Irene Felicetti, Secretary
George Hutfilz, Treasurer

Congregation Council

Irene Felicetti, Lori Fountain-Guillaume, Amy Hildreth, JoAnn Jordan, Bob Lariviere, Nancy Parmakian, Judy Roberts, Mike Scherr, Esther Smith, Alexandra Wise, Pastor Ashley Nicolls

Ministry Team Leaders or Council Liaison

Sharing & Caring – Jan Kruse
Christian Education – **Seeking volunteer leader**
Communications – Sue Scherr
Early Childhood Learning Cntr – Esther Smith
Evangelism – Bob Lariviere
Safety & Emergency Preparedness - Cindy Paxton
Fellowship – Amy Hildreth & Alexandra Wise
Finance – George Hutfilz
Food Pantry – George Hutfilz
Outreach Ministry Fund – Bob Lariviere
Property - Mike Scherr
Social – Judy Roberts
Stewardship – George & Marilyn Hutfilz
Worship and Music – Judy Carnal
Parish Administrator – Tracy Bateman
Director of Music – Fonda Davies

The Messenger is published monthly and distributed without charge to St. Paul Lutheran congregation members and friends.

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MISSION STATEMENT As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we are called through Baptism to proclaim and bear witness to God's reconciling grace in Jesus Christ to all; so that by joyfully sharing God's Word and encouraging each other to service for the sake of others, our lives together make a difference for Christ and His kingdom.

ECLC News

Congratulations Graduates!



On May 28, 2025, the ECLC held their VPK graduation ceremony. The children were all decked out in their graduation garb and sang songs to a joy filled audience. Director Lisa introduced each graduate and said what they wanted to be when they grew up. Afterward they received their diploma and had a picture taken with their teachers.



President's Corner

Across both the Old and New Testaments, we are reminded of the importance of the Sabbath-of setting aside time to rest, to renew our spirits, and to reconnect with God. Summer naturally invites this kind of pause. Many of us take vacations, spend time with family, or simply slow our pace. I hope you are finding moments to breathe deeply and rest well.

At the same time, the life of the church continues. While we may rotate out of routines during the summer months, the ministry of St. Paul doesn't take a break. Worship still happens each Sunday. The bills still arrive. Our outreach and fellowship continue. And we need you - your presence, your prayers, your participation, and yes, your gifts.

So please, take the rest you need. We want you refreshed and renewed. But also remember that your church community still needs you, too. Your presence - whether in the pew, behind the scenes, or through your financial support - deeply matters.

Wishing you a season of grace, rest, and meaningful connection.

JoAnn Jordan
Council President



PrAshley's article continued from pg. 1

There is a term that is becoming commonplace now: Christian Nationalism. It makes it seem like the United States is a Christian nation and the only way to be a Christian, or patriotic, is to affirm that the Christian church and nation must work together. Before seminary, I probably would have believed this. But now, this idea for me is too small for our God and for our country. Our God is bigger than just the U.S. and the U.S. is bigger and more beautiful than just a narrow version of Christianity. If you are interested in learning more about how our faith and our patriotism can work together in a healthy way, please check out this website <https://faithfulamerica.org/>

God bless

-PrAshley

Hope Seeds

Hope Seeds met on Monday, June 16, and 3,900 bags of cabbage seeds were packed. The next meeting is scheduled for July 21 at 1:00p.



Prayer Ministry



St. Paul offers many ways to pray with and for loved ones, the community, and the world!

Online Prayer Chain - an email goes out weekly with prayer requests. Please let PrAshley know if you want to be a pray-er.

Prayer Crosses - Located in the Fellowship Hall, the Sanctuary, and outside for prayers to be placed either in or on. Any prayer request put on the cross in the FH or Sanctuary will be put on the outside Hope Cross.

Prayer Zoom - Talking with God (see below) facilitated by Deacon Kim Heindl meets every Thursday at 4:00p.



Talking with God



As people of faith it is quite natural that we talk to God. In quiet moments, in moments of uncertainty or challenge, and in times of joy. It is part of our worship and helps us grow personally and communally in our relationship with Jesus. I would like to invite you to join a group of us that gather every Thursday at 4p via Zoom. We talk, share our lives, joys, concerns, and we pray. No stress and easy to be part of! Follow the link below (it is the same every week) or email Kimberly Heindl for an invitation: kaheindl@comcast.net.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81662784525pwd=QSt4TGNSR2F3L0ovUDJ3SVdWbjRYUT09>

Meeting ID: 816 6278 4525

Passcode: 628552

What an Honor!

We're proud to share that the *St. Paul Lutheran Education Building Restoration* has received an **Honor Award** from AIA Florida/Caribbean in the Historic Preservation category — the highest distinction awarded.

This project was a labor of love, and it means so much to see the careful restoration of this mid-century structure recognized at the state level. We're deeply grateful for your trust and collaboration throughout the process, it was a privilege to help return this building to its rightful place in the life of the church and community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be part of this important work.

You can see the announcement at the web address below. While you are there, we also won two other Honor awards, so take a look at those as well!

[email.robly.com/ls/click?](http://email.robly.com/ls/click?upn=u001.8UC8cZyi-2B-2F-2BQeb5IPsbbUw0fzqt7TTDrbtXzBoWDy2XCXm7S0xNH6Qeru8WIZgu-2FauGrjYOhV-2FEn-2BCp1Le7r9DLbb2M3d6eN1pmc-2FdrJKI1f2o3HBCbjJYKTHXnnUVTdp4F9_-2FUukSJcn7iDpRenMH0cPI5jNhXchgxxMG6TYzaIJaAkRN9zvHQnPllzun53W-2Bszyf95g3HQunAex6P1BqDWSNUSIVbZUbGM4kZpPwuJ7ckex-2F6AyxiKESwXkxh4f-2FaKkM-2F8YDaeTFiMRDqllv3OS8Gyp91p17WH9tRcat0FguMtnHwH2yjQ6le60iWom5N-2B4KE-2BvJvXz8IO4GZcETchynSfOypR3o9z6PJx0A7Dtq3KZf9mVIB3zF7s3N6Ydk0GL7FvnabRoURdHRgTksqpYqjCUOwdwiPznzb1IRYT6rr-2FzW3Em-2FKhAoMRJs-2F-2FXBoDrTG-2F0cM6WmKMsfnDT0-2BbhsqhpVOiGGzm41xYw-2BDTbCGXyRoyW0p1MZxN2Y0B53s7frHL0SyEXF6pJ03D8-2FetFpGhw1TKFXRCqveMCRX850HfwG2coVR8ydmryUPsZpwJ112VSNq04BEOrkm2DgGsR14gTNDN44QdhjkDnT-2FWsUL-2FlahcFIlgbbCXtFvyMUMSizVYJDyS2StNk68RUblnGQw-3D-3D)

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Warm regards,
Robert Connor, AIA
 Principal Architect





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The Fourth of July, also known as Independence Day, is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. This day signifies the formal declaration of the thirteen American colonies' separation from Great Britain and their subsequent birth as a nation. Celebrations often include fire-works, parades, barbecues, and family gatherings, reflecting both patriotic sentiment and the spirit of summer leisure.

Historical Context:

- The Continental Congress voted to declare independence from Great Britain on July 2, 1776, but the Declaration of Independence, drafted primarily by Thomas Jefferson, was officially adopted on July 4th.
- The Declaration outlined the reasons for separation, asserting the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and declaring the colonies' status as independent states according to the ConstitutionFacts.com.
- While the signing of the Declaration happened in August, July 4th was the date printed on the Dunlap Broadside, the first printed copies distributed throughout the colonies, making it the date widely associated with the event.
- The earliest celebrations involved bonfires, speeches, and the ringing of bells, and later, mock funerals for King George III were also part of the festivities according to Mount Vernon.



Interested in the 2025 St. Paul FF League?

Contact: Barry Smith 941-726-9276

Fantasy football is a game where participants act as managers of virtual NFL teams, drafting real players and scoring points based on their on-field performance. Players compete against each other in leagues, setting lineups, making trades, and navigating the waiver wire to maximize their team's fantasy points. The goal is to accumulate the most points each week and ultimately win your league's championship.

Key aspects of fantasy football:

- **Roster Selection:**
Involves drafting real NFL players to form your virtual team.
- **Lineup Management:**
Deciding which players to start each week based on their matchups and potential.
- **Scoring:**
Points are awarded based on the real-life statistics of your players (e.g., touchdowns, passing yards, receptions).

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Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity

For your information - if interested place these dates on your calendar.

2025-2026 SURE Process Calendar

2025

July

Coffee & Conversation with SURE - July 2, 2025 10am

SURE Vision meeting - July 21, 2025 4pm - Location TBD & Zoom

August

Listening Meeting Training and Kickoff - August 11th @ 6pm

Listening Season - Aug 12th - Sept 7th

September

Listening Team Gathering - September 8th @ 6pm

Community Problems Assembly - September 29th* 6:30pm

October

Research Kickoff - October 27th - 6:00pm

Research Season - **October-January**

2026

January

Network Update & Training - Late January

February

Rally - February 16th*

March

Action - March 9th*

April

Celebration - April 27th*

* Events will have Rehearsal the week before. Rehearsal date TBD.



Alta Vista Gift Cards



Every school year the members of St Paul's have provided \$25.00 Walmart gift cards to our neighborhood school, Alta Vista. Last year we provided a gift card to all 43 teachers. The teachers buy basic supplies for their classrooms. Many of the student families are low income.

Walmart gift cards or the money to purchase the cards will be collected. The dead line is July 27.



July 2	Michael Flanigan
July 3	Sue Goddard-Barry
July 10	Robert Masse
July 11	Ryan Masse
July 15	Keith Hildreth
July 18	Gage Fournier
July 20	Susana Santa Cruz
July 21	James Paulsson
July 24	Carolyn Mele

Join us for



**Monday 7/28 through Wednesday 7/30
9AM to noon**

VBS is open to children ages 3 through rising 3rd grade
(based on the 2025-2026 school year).

We also love having our older St. Paul kids involved!

- Rising 4th-7th graders are invited to sign up as Junior Assistants.
- Rising 8th graders and older can serve as full assistants, helping lead the fun and support younger children throughout the week.



Addie
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A celebration of Addie Miller's high school graduation took place on May 25, 2025. Best wishes for a bright future.



July 1 Tuesday
5:30p Community Meal

July 2 Wednesday
8:00a Property Ministry

July 3 Thursday
9:30a Food Pantry Prep
4:00p Prayer Team
Meeting Zoom

July 4 Friday
Office Closed

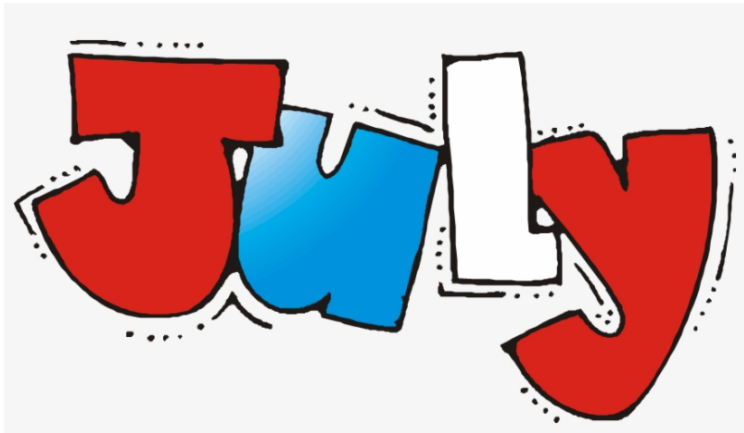


July 5 Saturday
9:00a Food Pantry
Distribution

July 6 Sunday
9:30a Worship Service

July 8 Tuesday
Ministry Reports Due
5:30p Community Meal

July 9 Wednesday
8:00a Property Ministry



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 10 Thursday
9:30a Food Pantry Prep
4:00p Prayer Team
Meeting Zoom

July 12 Saturday
9:00a Food Pantry
Distribution

July 13 Sunday
9:30a Worship Service

July 15 Tuesday
Messenger Deadline
5:30p Community Meal

July 16 Wednesday
8:00a Property Ministry

July 17 Thursday
9:30a Food Pantry Prep
4:00p Prayer Team
Meeting Zoom

July 19 Saturday
9:00a Food Pantry
Distribution

July 20 Sunday
9:30a Worship Service

July 21 Monday
1:00p Hope Seeds

July 22 Tuesday
5:30p Community Meal

July 23 Wednesday
8:00a Property Ministry

July 24 Thursday
9:30a Food Pantry Prep
4:00p Prayer Team
Meeting Zoom

July 26 Saturday
9:00a Food Pantry
Distribution

July 27 Sunday
9:30a Worship Service



July 28 Monday
9:00a VBS

July 29 Tuesday
9:00a VBS
5:30p Community Meal

July 30 Wednesday
8:00a Property Ministry
9:00a VBS

July 31 Thursday
9:30a Food Pantry Prep
4:00p Prayer Team
Meeting Zoom





•For all those serving in the U.S. Military, especially Gage Fournier. •The homeless in our neighborhood, our city, our nation and the world. •The Florida Bahamas Synod Office of the Bishop Staff: Bishop Pedro, Assistant to the Bishop Pastors Carlos, Derek, Nicole and Rob, Specialists Kim & Brittney, Support Staff Tina, Yuliet, & Ileana. •SURE - Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity. •Community Meal & Food Pantry Guests. •Prayers upon the HOPE Community Prayer Cross. •St. Paul members, especially Amy, Keith, & Marthe Hildreth, Pr. Don & Marty Hillerich, George & Marilyn Hutfilz. •St. Paul ECLC teachers and students. •The Arlington Park neighborhood.

Members

Beetle/O'Hara Family
Dorothy Boller
John Beyer
Susan Burmaster
Judy Carnal
Sue Fisher
JoAnn Flanigan
Valerie Nicolls
James Paulsson
Colleen Ryan
Mike Scherr
Susy Scholl
Esther Smith
Betty Smowton

Homebound Members

Donna Casala
Evelyn Gulliksen
Lindy Lindemann
Anna Mathisen
Virginia McQuaig
Michael Reiter
Carole Wilson

Friends and Family

Alice - JoAnn Jordan's friend
Brad - Cindy Paxton's brother
Debbie & Frank - Scherr's friends
Ed - Sandy Choquette's friend
Donnie - CM guest
Jeff - CM guest
Lucas - Scherr's neighbor's grandson
Marie - Cindy Paxton's friend
Mark - Hillerich's friend
Rick - Linda Knight's nephew

Sharon - Jane Schubert's friend
Susan - Cindy Paxton's friend
Sandi Acevedo - Acevedos sister-in-law
Sheryl Brandes - Scherr's sister-in-law
Jim Broad - Hannah Puckhaber's friend
Kim Brown - Hildreth's niece
Buete & Pearson family - Brian McCulley's family
Caroline Burmaster - Susan Burmaster's sister-in-law
Todd Couch - Sandy Choquette's son
Mike Cunningham - H. Roberts' friend
Rachel Dolgan - Hannah Puckhaber's friend
Dave Eller - Carolyn Mele's friend
John & Joy Emanuelli - Roberts' friends
Gladys Faraone - H. Robert's friend
John Foor - Ryan's friend
Glenn Greenwood - Hillerich's friend
Vickie Hall - Fonda Davies' sister
Niklaus Heisler - Irene Felicetti's great-grandson
Katy Hernandez - M. Acevedo's niece
Kara Johnson - Amy Hildreth's friend
Sonya Johnson - JoAnn Jordan's aunt
Nicole Ketter - Susan Burmaster's friend
Kate Kretschmann - Lindy Linderman's friend

David McCall - Judy Roberts' brother
Addie McLean - Director ECLC Lisa's daughter
Marsha McKinney - former member
Becky Nobles - Lindy Lindermann's friend
Linda & Jim Norris - Doris Schlotterback's family
Karen Paulsson - Jim Paulsson's sister
Hannah Puckhaber
Manny Ribas - Cindy Schlotterback's friend
Clint Shantz - former member
Brian & Kenny Schlotterback - Doris Schlotterback's sons
Hailey Schlotterback - Doris Schlotterback's granddaughter-in-law
Bethany Smith - Smiths' daughter
Natalie Smowton Boxx - Betty Smowton's great-granddaughter
Noel Scott Studenwalt - Smiths' nephew
Bill Sweeney - Hutfilz's grandson
Swisher Family - Kathie Snyder's family
Dan Torrence - Kathy Snyder's friend
David Van Ness - Missy Craig's brother
Elaine & Mark Vanderweight - Jim Paulsson's friends
Curtis Weckwerth - Rick Weckwerth's cousin
John & Janet Welther - Ethel Hamilton's family

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble, with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." 2Corinthians 1:3-4

St. Paul Lutheran Church

& Early Childhood Learning Center

2256 Bahia Vista Street, Sarasota, FL 34239

☎ 941-955-6479 Preschool 941-955-6480

📞 940 -955-8600

🌐 www.StPaulSarasota.org

Rev. Ashley Nicolls, Pastor

Rev. Don Hillerich, Pastor Emeritus

Sunday Schedule

9:30a Service of Worship In-person

9:30a Service of Worship on Facebook Live



St. Paul Mission Prayer



God of grace and love, you created us as your children and have brought us to St. Paul Lutheran Church. We are not perfect people, but this church is the perfect place for imperfect people. Thank you for your grace through Christ given to us. You call us to proclaim to everyone we meet that your grace is for them too. As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we ask you to help us joyfully share your word and serve your people, so that together our lives make a difference in your kingdom here on earth. Strengthen us in our mission together; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.