



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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ROOTED & GROWING

stpaulnitz.net

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN



Walking home after late service on Christmas Eve, I had a profound feeling of wholeness. The warmth of the service, the ringing of the bells and glow of candles moved me like it moved so many. As I reflected on the moment, I realized that my happiness extended beyond the beautiful worship service. I wasn't simply thankful for Christmas at St Paul, but I was filled with tremendous gratitude for the ministry at our congregation.

Amazing ministry happens each week here: parents sharing about the challenges of raising children while reflecting on the Gospel of Luke; quilters stitching and praying for refugees who will receive their work; CELC children laughing and learning; people of every age gathering weekly to worship the Lord.

I can trace some of my joy back to the process of updating the strategic plan, which started last summer. When I met with the Council appointed team to reflect on our strategic goals from three years ago, we had an awesome opportunity to thank God for faithfulness in the ministry. (Thank you to everyone who served on this committee; thank you also to Tony Chivinski for leading this.) Yes, we could check boxes about goals met; but our focus shifted to rejoicing in the cool stuff that happens here!

Houston, we don't have a problem, we have a mission!

As we reflected on what God was doing in our midst, we did realize though that there were some things we needed to address. These were not seen as problems, but ways in which we were being called into mission by God to move forward.

Areas We Are Being Called Into Mission

- We need more space for Common Ground groups on Sunday morning. We also need more leaders for emerging groups, including young adults.
- We continue to experience "fullness" at the 10:45 service and growth at the 8:15 that suggests we could and perhaps should have another weekly worship service.
- With a larger congregation, we need even more intentionality about making sure people find a niche and a sense of community.
- We invested quite a bit in creating the sacred grounds. How can we drive more community engagement and spirituality through this space?
- We have grown our relationship with the schools across the road, but it still feels like this is an untapped resource.
- Our social hall and HVAC in the education wing are not simply dated and inadequate for our ministry but need repairs. And we acknowledge the narthex bathrooms and chair lift needs updating.
- As the denomination (ELCA) continues to decline, how can we ensure quality future pastors for St Paul as well as do our part in training future clergy?

Out of these discussions grew three 2026 Strategic Initiatives

2026 Strategic Initiatives

Rooted	Growing	Seeding
<p><i>Make room for people</i></p> <p>St. Paul is called to provide the people who come to St. Paul, whether long-standing or newer, the opportunity to become rooted in God's grace. We respond by expanding worship and common ground group capacity and increasing our intentionality about integrating people into St Paul community.</p>	<p><i>Connect people to the sacred ground</i></p> <p>St Paul is called to bring people together who are hungry for authentic community amid our fragmented and lonely world. Between the CELC, the Sacred Grounds and our proximity to schools, we have amazing opportunities to connect with people outside our walls and break down barriers to people finding relationships with Jesus and others.</p>	<p><i>Develop leaders for the church of 2040</i></p> <p>St Paul is called to develop leaders who can serve in existing and emerging ministries at and beyond our congregation. We respond by fostering a culture and defining pathways in which individuals discern and develop their gifts for ministry and encourage others into ministry service.</p>

Did we get it right?

None of us fully know the will of God. We do our best to listen to the Holy Spirit: reading Scripture, discussing with each other, relying on what we've learned in the "real world" and praying. After months of discernment, we feel confident that Jesus Christ is sending us in this general direction. But if you feel we missed something, please let me or anyone on Council know!

Moreover, this particular strategic plan necessitates a **capital campaign**. We cannot make room without some renovation, including to the social hall. In the next few months, you will hear more about this, as well as other potential improvements to the education wing.

Thank you again for your support of the ministry and I look forward to where Jesus leads us in 2026!

~ *Pastor Rob*



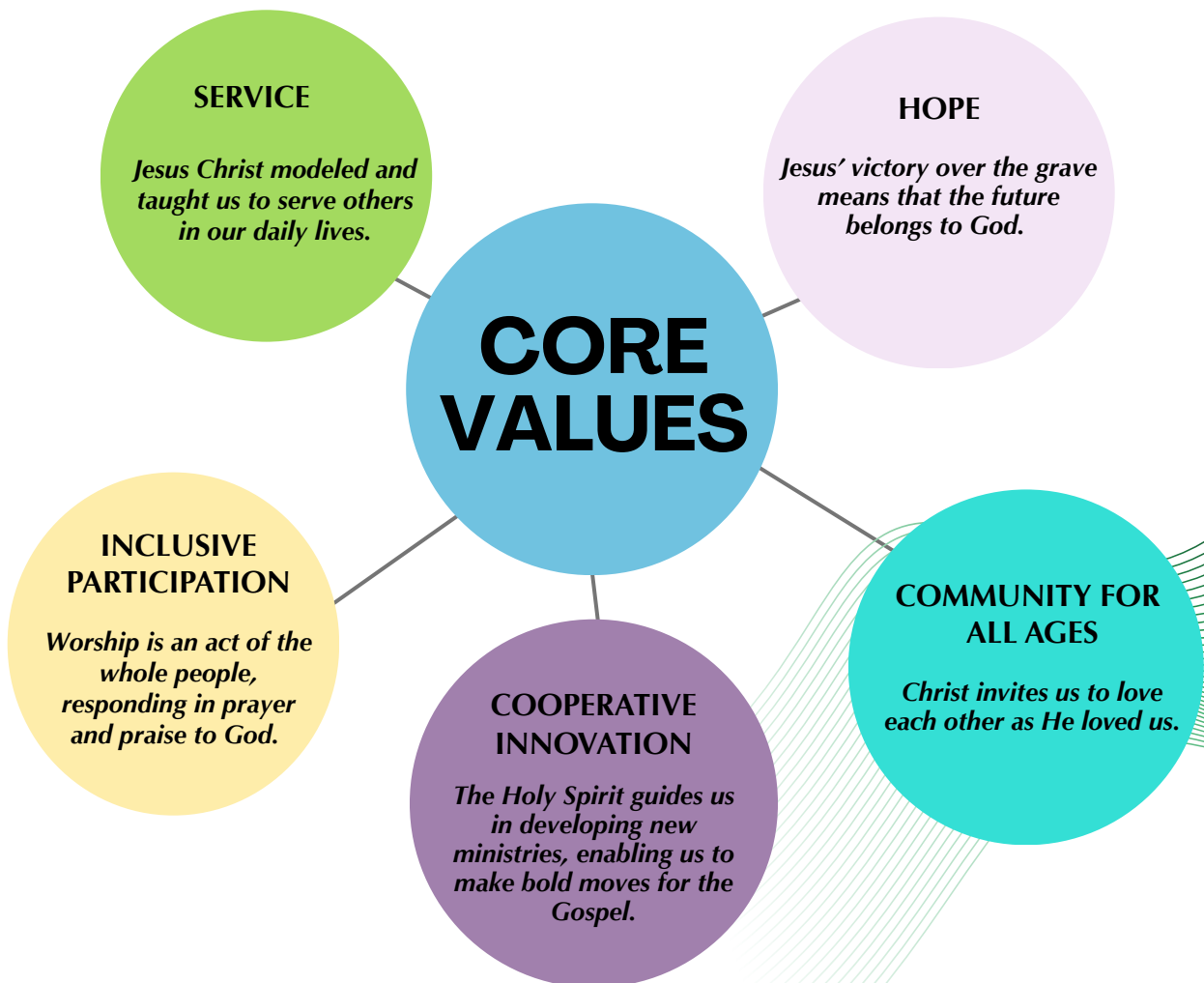
ST. PAUL OVERVIEW

Mission

Rooted in God’s grace, we grow loving relationships with Jesus and each other to serve the world.

Vision

Answering Christ’s call to revitalize lives and the community by enabling the sacred ground to become the common ground.



2025 Ministry Highlights

Each week, we faithfully proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ, dug deep into God's Word, encouraged each other in life and discipleship and served our neighbors in our community and the broader world.

The year 2025 also brought some beautiful highlights.

◆ Hope

◆ Making Room for Growth

In response to ongoing and expected growth, Council has approved plans for a capital campaign and renovations, believing that God is guiding us to make room!

◆ Confirmation of Adults

Five adults publicly affirmed their faith after completing a class that explored the foundations of Christian belief, along with writing a reflection on Scripture.

◆ Christian Early Learning Center Chapel

Every week, over 75 children and teachers from the Christian Early Learning Center gather in our sanctuary for chapel. We purchased Bibles for each classroom and offered subsidies for Bibles to CELC families.



◆ Community for All Ages

◆ Social Hall & Intergenerational Fun

Activities such as the Wheel of Faith, Uno Tournament, Advent Wreath making, Gingerbread Nativity, and Lenten Soup Suppers have united all generations in a spirit of fun, fellowship, and faith.

◆ Young Adults

A significant number of young adults have started attending St. Paul, leading to the introduction of new programs such as summer Trivia nights, Settlers of Catan gatherings, and a Volleyball team.

◆ Dementia Care

This group convenes monthly to connect, provide comfort, and share strategies for engaging with and supporting loved ones living with dementia.



2025 Ministry Highlights

◆ Service

◆ Youth Mission Trips

Youth participated in two trips this summer — repairing flood-damaged homes in Kentucky and attending the Diakonos week of service at Camp Kirchenwald.

◆ Women of the ELCA Ingathering

Women of the congregation came together to create knitted clothing, handmade quilts and packaged personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief, all while beautifully adorning the sanctuary.

◆ Year-End Generosity

In response to the food shortage at the Lititz Warwick Community Chest, St. Paul hosted the Scout food collection, raising over \$7,000 for the Warwick Hub. Additionally, we raised over \$18,000 at the Lititz Empty Bowls event to support local needs.



◆ Inclusive Participation

◆ Children's Sermons

Children's sermons featured young adults in their twenties & one adult who was born in the twenties, sharing their faith experiences. Families were given \$20 to brighten the world and gathered to share how they used the money. .

◆ Solid Ground

The stonework in the Prayer Labyrinth enhanced accessibility, making the space more welcoming for individuals of all ages and those with mobility challenges.

◆ All Saints & Reformation Music

Various genres and ensembles collaborated to honor and glorify God through music.



2025 Ministry Highlights

◆ Cooperative Innovation

◆ Warwick High School Learning

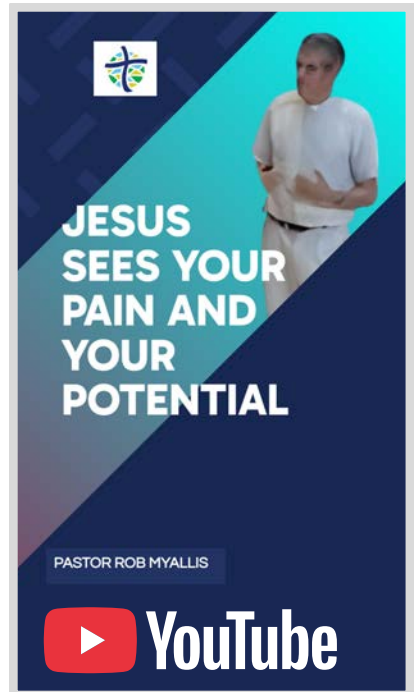
Science classes from the high school met at the Sacred Grounds to study and plant trees.

◆ 5th Quarter Partnership

The Middle School principal and safety officer generously volunteered to assist with our 5th Quarter party, which typically attracts nearly one-third of the students!

◆ AI Technology

We are using AI to assist in the production of short form sermon videos, routinely reaching an audience of 2,000 people each week.



All of this was accomplished in a year in which we replaced our narthex and sanctuary heating system, reconfigured cleaning and maintenance staff, replaced the last halogen fixtures in the sanctuary, rehabbed rooms 7 and 8, welcomed nearly 50 new members, and had more baptisms than funerals!

2026 CHURCH COUNCIL CANDIDATES

We are grateful for these individuals who have prayerfully considered serving St. Paul Lutheran Church through leadership on the Church Council.



Mike Healy

Mike is a retiree who spends a lot of time at St Paul, whether working on the gardens around the church, changing the message on the outdoor sign, or serving on the property committee. Together with his wife, Karen, he regularly attends the 8:15 worship service.

[Favorite Bible Verse: Phillippians 4:13](#)



Mikayla Wagaman

Mikayla works for the Lebanon-Lancaster IU, focusing on special education. Mikayla started attending St Paul with her husband, Adam.. She has been instrumental in launching the Faith and Lead collective and the Lenten Young Women's Bible study.

[Favorite Bible Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6](#)



Collin Maryniak

Collin is a sophomore at Warwick High School, who was confirmed at St. Paul in 2024. He loves making music and esports. His parents, Rick and Jenn, are also active in St. Paul. He has been our videographer (online worship) since the fall of 2025.

[Favorite Bible Verse: Psalms 3:5-8](#)

2025 Council Members

We appreciate the dedication and faithful service of the church council of 2025. Their leadership and commitment have strengthened St. Paul and prepared it well for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Corey Troxell, Council President

Corey is finishing his 6th year on Council. Thank you Corey for serving as President, helping us through COVID, the roof and solar panel project and the 2022-2025 strategic plan.

Rich Shober, Vice President

Deb Rothermel, Treasurer

Signe Fink, Secretary

Sandra Bingaman

Justin Charles

Mike Healy

Eric Hoke

Robin Rochow

Thank You!

Endowment Committee

Thank you to the Endowment Committee for their work in 2025.

Beth Hoffer

Chris Runkle

Jed Kensinger

Jane Brye

Al Rothermel*

Sandy Bingaman (serves as Council representative to Endowment committee)

We also thank Rick Shober for filling in this year in the Endowment Distribution meeting this year due to absence of another Endowment member.

*Al Rothermel is up for reelection for a third term. He and his wife, Deb, have been active for decades at St. Paul. Now retired from his chemistry teaching career, he volunteers with the Sacred Grounds, helps lead the Life Together Faith Formation class, and has served as council president.

2025 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

At the end of 2025, our income has continued to grow with an increase in giving for the General Fund and Designated Giving funds, again giving us a surplus for the year. Both the Church and Cemetery Endowment account balances showed a growth of around 10-11% despite the varying market. Increase in Designated Funds was mainly from the Employee Retention Credits we received as part of COVID relief. These were applied for back in 2023 and the majority of this will be transferred to the CELC. We are in discussions with the CELC about how these funds might, at least partially, defray costs for the upcoming capital campaign projects.

Bank Account Balance

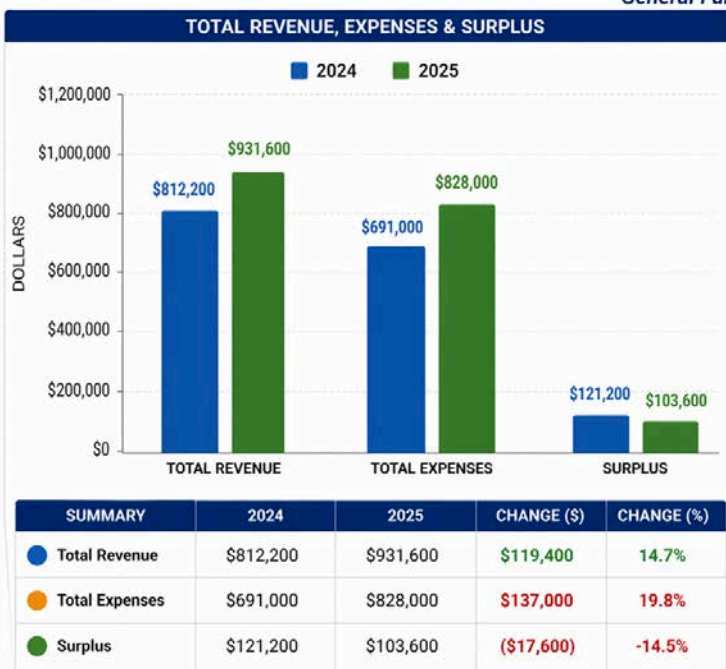
Account	12/31/2024	12/31/2025
General Fund	\$316,000	\$300,000
Designated Fund	\$172,000	\$584,000
Capital Campaign	\$63,000	\$6,900
Cemetery Endowment	\$15,000	\$29,000
Church Endowment	\$1,000	\$44,000
Total Bank Balance	\$567,000	\$963,900
Church Endowment	\$859,000	\$912,000
Cemetery Endowment	\$291,000	\$308,000
Total Endowment Balance	\$1,150,000	\$1,220,000
Total Account Balances	\$1,717,000	\$2,183,900

Revenue and Expenses

General Fund Revenue grew by 15% over 2024. Overall Offering increased by 13%. Expenses increased by 20% mainly due to adding a fulltime staff person with benefits, changes in outsource and in-house cleaning and maintenance projects, and increase in Mission & Outreach donations. We ended the year with a 104K surplus.

2024 vs 2025 REVENUE & EXPENSES

General Fund



GENERAL FUND REVENUES	2024	2025	% OF 2025
Offering	\$763,000	\$861,000	92.4%
St. Paul CELC	\$27,000	\$51,000	5.5%
Other Income	\$6,000	\$400	0.04%
Major Repair	\$2,000	\$2,000	0.2%
Use of Property	\$200	\$300	0.03%
Thrivent Choice	\$2,000	\$3,200	0.34%
SREC & Electric Production	\$2,000	\$2,700	0.28%
Interest & Reimbursement	\$10,000	\$11,000	1.2%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE	\$812,200	\$931,600	

GENERAL FUND EXPENSES	2024	2025	% OF 2025
Salaries & Benefits	\$481,000	\$562,000	67.8%
Buildings & Grounds	\$102,000	\$152,000	18.4%
Administration	\$46,000	\$42,000	5.0%
Mission & Outreach	\$25,000	\$33,000	4.0%
Music Worship & Congregational Ministries	\$16,000	\$19,000	2.3%
Children and Youth Ministries	\$21,000	\$20,000	2.4%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENSES	\$691,000	\$828,000	

AT A GLANCE		
<p>REVENUE Up \$119,400 (14.7%)</p>	<p>EXPENSES Up \$137,000 (19.8%)</p>	<p>SURPLUS Down \$17,600 (-14.5%)</p>

\$104,000

Revenue grew 15% over 2024

Offering increased 13%

Expenses rose 20% (new staff, facilities)

No liabilities — \$0 debt

How We Used the \$104K Surplus

Allocation	Amount
Lutheran, Local & International Mission & Outreach	\$25,000
Sanctuary Camera Updates & Staff Counseling Reviews	\$9,000
Architect Work for Capital Campaign Planning	\$13,000
Strategic Initiatives Reserve (Future Projects)	\$57,000

2025 MINISTRY INVESTMENTS

Lutheran Ministries

- ELCA – Lower Susquehanna Synod: \$16,000
- ELCA – International Relief: \$800
- ELCA – Lutheran Disaster Response: \$500
- ELCA – World Hunger: \$4,900
- ELCA – Domestic Relief: \$3,675
- Kanga Lutheran Church: \$2,600
- Lutheran Camping Corp (Wittel Farm): \$270 + \$1,000 Endowment Grant
- Lutheran World Relief: \$1,325 + \$500 Endow.
- LS Synod Disaster Response Team: \$500 + \$2,000 Endowment Grant
- ELCA Missionary Support: \$4,500
- Church World Services: \$110

Internal Ministry

- Camperships: \$3,225
- CELC Scholarships – Endowment Grant: \$6,000
- Children's Ministry Projects: \$562 + \$500 Endow.
- Sacred Grounds: \$7,638 + \$2,000 Endowment Grant
- WELCA: \$1,200
- Youth Ministries: \$5,604 + \$1,000 Endowment Grant
- Room 7 (Scout Room) Renovations: \$5,274
- WiFi Upgrades: \$295
- Pew Torches: \$2,000
- Property Committee – Endowment Grant: \$11,600 (for the expansion of building security cameras)

Local Ministry

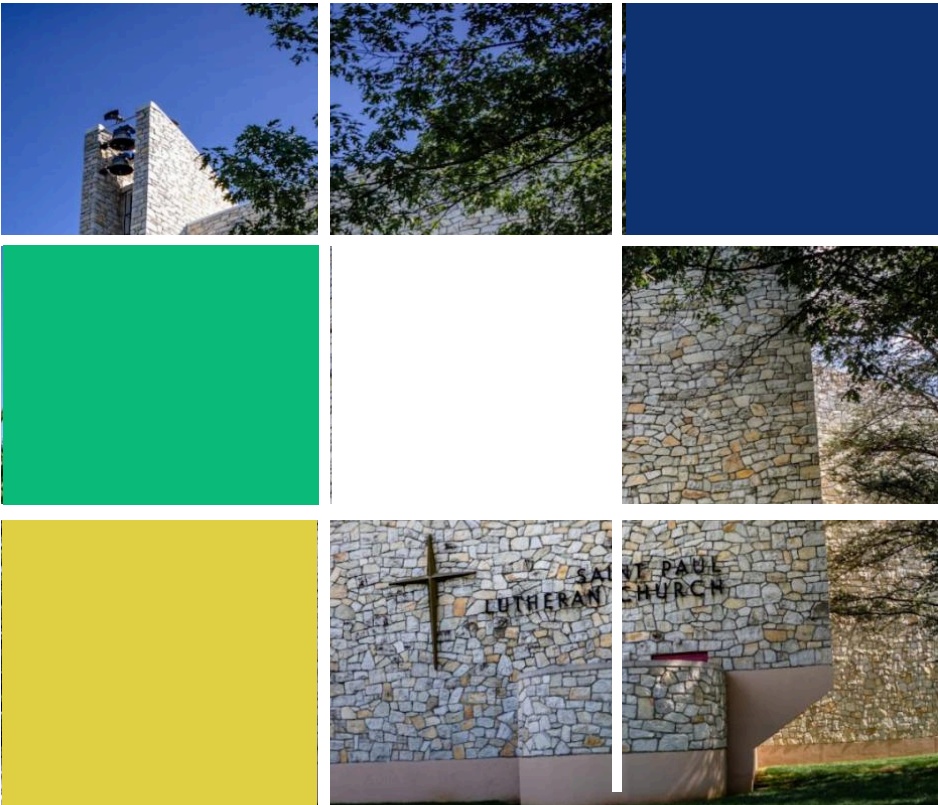
- Bridge of Hope – Endowment Grant: \$2,000
- Church World Services Lancaster – Endow.: \$5,000
- Hosanna! Fellowship (Thanksgiving Meal): \$1,000
- Lititz Emergency Services (Ambulance): \$850
- Lititz Springs Park – Endowment Grant: \$500
- Lititz Warwick Community Chest: \$2,350 + \$6,000 Endowment Grant
- Empty Bowls: \$18,796
- North Star Initiative – Endowment Grant: \$500
- Power Packs: \$2,767
- Warwick Community Hub: \$4,992
- Peter's Porch – Endowment Grant: \$2,000
- Lancaster Co. Refugee Programs: \$2,500
- North Lancaster Co. Disaster Response: \$2,500
- 5th Quarter for Youth: \$750
- Fall Festival: \$300

International Ministry

- Institute for Child Healthcare Africa (ICHA) – Endowment Grant: \$6,000
- Medan Initiative – Endowment Grant \$2,000
- Ethiopian NICU Conference: \$10,000



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