

St. Paul's Ambassador

*A newsletter making Christ Jesus known,
looking forward to July 2026*

"So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us." 2 Corinthians 5:20

Why Be ELCA Lutheran? 5 Reasons!

by Pastor Ingrid

1. ELCA Lutheran theology puts the Cross of Christ at the center, which grounds us in right relationship with God

Humans are great at recognizing patterns. One of the best things about being Lutheran is that our theology recognizes that the pattern of our relationship with God is found in the cross of Christ. Sure, we can see God in glorious and awe-inspiring things and events, but that vision of God isn't necessarily Good News for us. What is Good News, is that God also can be found in the love and faithful presence (he didn't quit!) of Jesus on the cross. It's like Paul writes in Romans 5:8: **"God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us."** God doesn't just love those who seem to have it all together - God loves us just as we are right this moment, in our weakness and brokenness. And God doesn't just work through times that seem like victory; God works through those times that seem like failure and even death. If it's night, morning is on the way. If you experience a death, God promises to bring new life. Just hang in there!



This clear focus saves us from having to pretend that we're better than we really are - instead, we recognize that all human beings are sinful and broken. As a wise friend says this means we're no better than anyone else, but we're also no worse than anyone else. Pedestals are reserved for God alone; we Lutherans are justifiably suspicious of folks who claim to have climbed some of kind of spiritual ladder and seek to lord their spiritual gains over others.

The two beams of the cross are a visual reminder of our relationship with God and one another: God always comes down to us in love and compassion, and we are invited to share that love with our sisters and brothers, who are our equals.

2. ELCA Lutherans are all about building bridges

Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Catholic Church in 1521 for his refusal to recant the criticisms he'd leveled at certain practices of the Catholic church. He didn't intend to begin a new branch of Christianity, just to help spark reform. But the split seemed irreversible, and already by the mid 1520's other fractures began to take place within Protestantism. The tree whose trunk is New Testament Christianity now has many, many branches.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but we ELCA Lutherans seek unity whenever possible. The ELCA was born from Christians coming together. Our denomination was formed in 1988 by the joining together of the ALC (American Lutheran Church) and the LCA (Lutheran Church in America), as well as the AELC (those Missouri Synod Lutherans who'd formed Seminex, the seminary-in-exile, as a protest against an ideological crackdown that had taken place at Concordia Seminary).

In that same spirit we seek meaningful relationships with other denominations. As of today, the ELCA is in **full communion** with 8 other denominations: the United Church of Christ, PCUSA (Presbyterian), the Reformed Church in America, the Moravians, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Church of Canada. Full Communion means that a pastor ordained in any of these other churches could preside at worship in an ELCA church. We realize that living out Jesus' prayer for his church: **"I ask ... that they may all be one. As you, Father,**

are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21) means seeking as broad and welcoming a witness to Christian unity as possible.

3. ELCA Lutherans believe in the equality of all people and seek to live this out

On June 10th, the Southern Baptist Convention voted to ban women from serving as pastors, because of their narrow interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:12 vs. the many women listed as deacons and elders in the New Testament (like Phoebe, Junia, Priscilla, and others). As Dr. Meredith Stone, the executive director of Baptist Women in Ministry stated in an interview with ABC news, "I am sad for the millions of women and girls who will have to hear how the SBC messengers cheered loudly when it was announced that over 6,000 people had voted to limit how they can express God's call on their life." What will girls in the SBC think of their own value in God's eyes when they see no reflection of their own gender in that denomination's portrayal of God or in the appointed leaders of their churches? What conflict will they experience when God calls them to preaching or teaching roles, as God surely will - see Acts 2:17! - and then they find obstacle after obstacle placed in their path?

We believe in the reality of the outpouring of God's Spirit on all people (Acts 2:17), and that our identity in Christ, as expressed in Galatians 3:28, far supersedes the cultural or biological differences that would try to divide us. We ELCA Lutherans don't have to engage in impossible calculations about who is worthy and who is not. We believe every person to be both saint and sinner, but of incalculable worth in God's eyes.



4. ELCA Lutherans believe faith means caring for both body and soul

Martin Luther shocked folks by saying that for a Christian to be a farmer, teacher, or parent was just as faithful a way of following Jesus as becoming a priest or a monk or a nun. He knew that God's Kingdom needs all of us and all our various gifts. Luther also recognized that satisfying someone's physical hunger is not less important than giving them spiritual food. Even though James wasn't Luther's favorite book of the Bible, he recognized the value of James 2:15-16, **"If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?"**

That perspective has made ELCA Lutherans dedicated to making people's lives better in practical, tangible ways, through ministries like blessing boxes, free clinics, food pantries, clothing closets, home health organizations, assisted living and retirement communities, just to name a few. Every year we highlight the importance of tangible ministry through "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday. The global organization Lutheran World Relief and the U.S.- based Lutheran Disaster Response have great reputations among relief organizations for knowing what they're doing and doing it well, for staying for the long haul to help communities rebuild, and for being fiscally wise and responsible.

5. We welcome all at Jesus' Table

Holy Communion in an ELCA church is a visible, tangible expression of something we believe: That the church building is God's house, and that Christ Jesus is host of the meal we share. Because Jesus is host, we practice open communion. Again, we don't have to do any moral calculations to try to figure out who's "worthy" to receive communion and who's not. We believe Jesus can take care of those things. Our communion table is open to anyone who desires to meet Christ and experience His real presence there.



These are just five reasons I love being an ELCA Lutheran. What are your favorite reasons? Do you have any questions about what we have in common with other Christian denominations and what makes us different? If so, don't hesitate to call, text, email, or stop by the church office on a Tuesday or Thursday morning.

Peace, blessings,
Pastor Ingrid

Gathering News

St. Paul's 200th Anniversary

There's a whole lot of planning going on to celebrate St. Paul's 200th anniversary year in 2027! It's not too late for you to join one of the committees: Activities, Communications, History, Property, and Worship. Eileen Fisher and Oma Gail Simmons are chairs for the overall planning, and Steve Stratton is coordinating the different committees. Please reach out to any of these folks to join in!

Altar flowers

Altar flowers for July are given to the glory of God and in memory and honor of loved ones by Ralph & Judy Heltzel.

Relay for Life Chicken BBQ



St. Paul's Relay for Life team will sponsor a Chicken BBQ following worship on Sunday, July 19. Come join us for fellowship and some delicious BBQ prepared by James Dellinger. A freewill offering will be accepted.

Thank you!

Special thanks to Aven Booher, who provided us with worship music at the piano on June 21.

Address changes

Please inform St. Paul's if your address changes. Newsletters that are unable to be delivered due to address changes are returned to St. Paul's with additional postage due. Thank you!

Cemetery cleanup

Flowers and decorations must be removed from the cemetery. Mowing has begun and the Property Committee will be cleaning up the area.

Learning and Youth Needs

We are in need of people to help lead our learning and youth programs. Prayerfully consider how God is calling you to serve in this, or in any area of our church life.



St. Paul's Ambassador

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Jerome Parish Pastor Ingrid Chenoweth

4109 Jerome Road, Edinburg, VA 22824

Parsonage: 540-660-9041

Office 540-856-2639

Email: stpjerom@shentel.net

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stpauljeromeva>

Web Page:

<https://www.stpaulslutheranjerome.org>

Our mission is to be a living example of God's love.

Musicians:

Steve Stratton

Miriam Stratton

Dara Booher

Congregation Council

Jeff Dellinger, President

Anna Barb

Joe Belan

Matt Booher

Donald Bowers

Eileen Fisher

Kaitlyn Funkhouser

Miranda Hawkins

Becky Jenkins

Orville Smoot

Miriam Stratton

Aven Booher, youth representative

Articles for the St. Paul's Ambassador are welcomed from members and friends of the congregation. Please submit your articles to Gail Dawson.

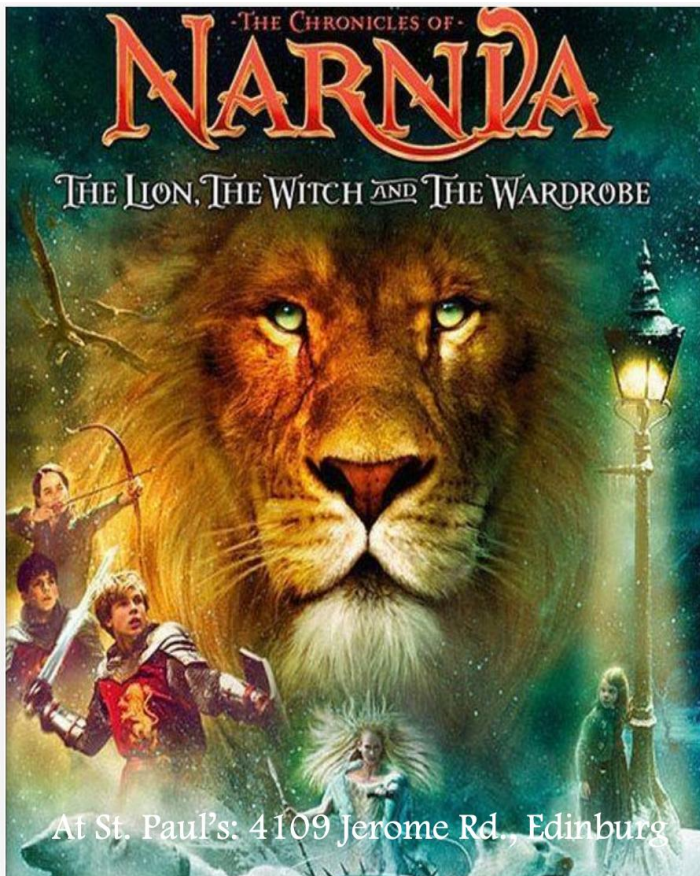
Attendance and Offerings

Date 2026	Worship Attend	Worship Offering	Sun Sch Attend	Sun Sch Offering
5/3	43	\$1,440.00	N/A	N/A
5/10	30	\$914.00	N/A	N/A
5/17	46	\$891.00	N/A	N/A
5/24	40	\$855.00	N/A	N/A
5/31	24	\$350.00	N/A	N/A

Thank you for your contributions to the ministry of this church!

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
c/o Denise Dellinger, Treasurer
77 Landis Lane, Edinburg, VA 22824

Join us for Worship, Study, and Service



**St. Paul's Lutheran
Church, Jerome Parish
STEAM Camp /VBS!**

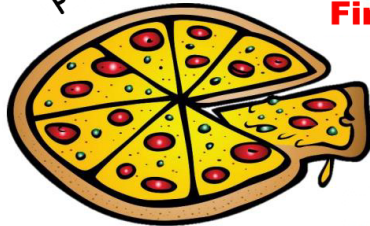
DATES TIMES AGES

**Thurs. 5:00— Ages 3
July 30 7:00 to 18
to Sat. pm
Aug. 1**

Dinner included!

To RSVP: Call or text
540-660-9041 or email
stpjerom@shentel.net

*Dinner
provided*



Young Families'

Chat-n-Chew

First Monday of each month

6:00 - 7:00 pm

**Everyone welcome!
Kids enjoy a Bible-lesson &
activities while parents unwind**

At St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Jerome

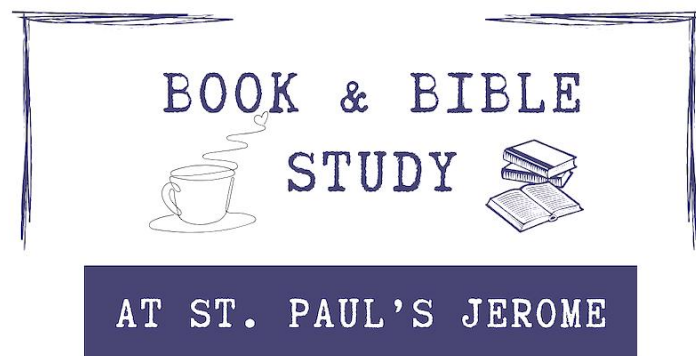
4109 Jerome Rd., Edinburg VA 22824
Questions? Call or text Matt Booher at 540-325-7503

Bible and Book Study: Falling Upward

Pastor Ingrid writes: Hello St. Paul's! I'd like to invite everyone to a Bible and book study centered around a great book called *Falling Upward: Wisdom for the Second Half of Life* by Richard Rohr. Rohr is a very faithful and insightful Christian writer (and Franciscan priest), and this book discusses how God works differently in us at different stages of our lives. It's relevant for folks of any age! We'll be meeting upstairs in the gathering room (unless our study needs more space). You won't need your own copy of the book; I'll share relevant passages.

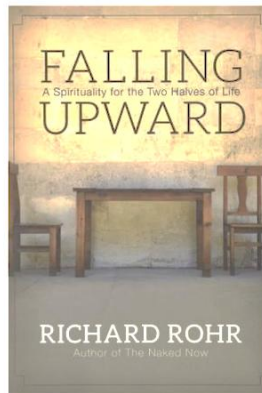
Even though we're scheduled for every Thursday for the near future, please don't feel like you have to come *every* single week. Just come when you can and bring a friend! I'll brew some decaf (and regular) coffee - cookies would be most welcome!

There is a Zoom option if you'd rather join from your own living room or kitchen :) Let me know if you need the link.



Currently Thursdays, 4-5pm

Also available via Zoom



Personal copy of the book not required

Please join us upstairs in the meeting room

4109 Jerome Rd., Edinburg VA



Congratulations to our recent graduates!

Kyle Hansberger	University of Maryland	Eric Hansberger – Father/Nancy Hansberger, Grandmother
Hannah Sachs	New Kent HS, Providence Forge	Sandy & Joe Belan, Grandparents
Trey Coffman	Central HS	Brenda Bowman & John Coffman
Wyatt Miller	Stonewall Jackson HS	Carolyn & Wayne Miller
Ava Biller	Stonewall Jackson HS	Ellen Biller/Kristopher
Finn Booher	Pre-school	Matt & Dara Booher
Cailyn McMillan	Stonewall Jackson HS	Vicki McMillan

Sharing our blessings

“Take what you need. Leave what you can.” That’s the idea behind our Blessing Box: a way to help our community when cupboards are empty and there’s no transportation to get to town.

It’s not just food that is available in the Blessing Box: here’s Finn helping his mom shop for hand soap and dish soap! We are currently in need of shampoo, deodorant, and toilet paper; and proteins like peanut butter, canned meats, and similar items. Be like Finn, and pick up a few Blessing Box items on your next trip to the store!



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Denise captured this photograph of a bald eagle perched on the church roof on June 5.

Young Lutherans' Page

Did you know that Martin Luther and his wife Katie loved kids? They had 6, and then adopted a bunch of others! There were always lots of kids and friends in the Luther household - lots of love and laughter and fun.



These kids lived at a time before electricity, so there were no lightbulbs, no air conditioning, no TVs, no phones, no internet. What do you think they did for fun?



Color the Luther Rose to match the example! Each color has a meaning:
Yellow = forever (how long we will be loved & live in God's presence)
Blue = heaven
Green = growth and joy
White = peace
Red = God's love
Black = Ouch! Jesus hurt when he hung on the cross

The first Christians had to find each other with secret symbols! A fish meant "Christian" because the letters of FISH in their language stood for: Jesus Christ Son of God Savior. Draw a fish here:

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
JEROME PARISH
4109 JEROME ROAD
EDINBURG, VIRGINIA 22824

NON - PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U. S. POSTAGE & FEES PAID
PERMIT #14
EDINBURG, VA 22824

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Jerome, Virginia

July 5:	Worship, 10:30 am in person and via Zoom.
July 6:	(Monday) Young Families Chat-n-Chew, 6 - 7 pm
July 12:	Worship, 10:30 am in person and via Zoom.
July 13:	(Monday) Council meeting, 6 pm
July 19:	Worship, 10:30 am in person and via Zoom. Relay for Life Chicken BBQ follows worship
July 26:	Worship, 10:30 am in person and via Zoom.
Jul 30-Aug 1:	(Thurs-Sat) 5 - 7 pm. The Chronicles of Narnia STEAM Camp/Vacation Bible School <i>Dinner included. Ages 3 - 18. RSVP to 540-660-9041 or email stpjerom@shentel.net</i>
Thursdays:	4 - 5 pm, Book and Bible Study with Pastor Ingrid: <i>Falling Upward</i> by Richard Rohr

Please remember in prayer members and friends who are experiencing illness, in hospitals or nursing homes, those who serve in the military, and families who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

Bonnie Andes
Arlene Barb
Beatrice Beveridge
Dennis Brown
Dorothy Brown

Gary Funkhouser
Genevieve Heishman
John Hill
Dawn Hockenberry
Winnie Lytton

Vicky McMillan
Dick Neff
Dawn Nesselrodt
Jim Newland
Peggy Reedy
Otis Ryman

Peter Shoemaker
Larry Smoot
Kay Townsend
Mary Vann
Steven Weaver, Sr