



THE EPISTLE

Monthly Newsletter of
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

September 2016

DON'T BE A 65%'ER !!

By Nelson Langefeld

Well, it's that time of year again! Church Council is talking about the budget for the next year and how we can fulfill our mission to serve our Lord as he would want us to. Each Committee is forming a preliminary budget to outline its goals for 2017. In order to accomplish this, they need support from the congregation by filling out and returning the Estimate of Giving Cards.

Here is where We, the members of our congregation, come in! These Cards will soon be handed out to all members and friends of the congregation. Last year only about 35% of the giving units responded by filling out this "Estimate of Giving." That means 65% of giving units did not respond with what they expected to be able to give to the Church. (It is important to remember that these are "Estimates" and not a firm contract and can be altered at any time.) After the Estimate of Giving cards are returned, Council will then balance the estimated amount to be given against the preliminary budget, and modify the budget, if needed. However, without these "Estimates," your Church Council Committees have no idea if the congregation can support their programs to carry on God's plan for St. Paul. *(Continued on page 2)*

"As a community of
Christian believers,
we are called by God to
use the many
gifts He has given us,
within the church
and the community, so
others may come
to know Him."

- St. Paul Mission Statement

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Were you one of the 65% last year??? Don't be this year!!! Without your Estimated support, it will be very difficult for the Council to be good stewards of your dollars and put together a meaningful program for 2017. While the support of the 65% was still there last year, it was an unknown factor and that made Council's job very difficult. The support of the entire congregation will allow us to fully carry on God's plan for St. Paul for 2017.

Charlotte and I will be completing our "Estimate of Giving" card and returning it by Reformation Sunday (Oct. 30). Please prayerfully consider your response and join us. Don't be a 65%'er!!!

God be with you.

Nelson Langefeld

Thrivent Action Team Update

Since May, the *Epistle* has featured a request for Thrivent members to sponsor items on our wish list by filling out applications for Thrivent Action Team grants.

Thanks to several members, Thrivent Action Team grants have made the following projects possible this year: (1) purchasing batting for the Dorcas Circle so that they can make even more quilts for those in need, (2) care packages for military members, (3) a new cement pad for the parsonage back patio, which prevents slipping accidents, erosion, and basement flooding, (4) backpacks and school supplies were given to children in our congregation in need and they were blessed for the upcoming school year on August 7, (5) the youth received a grant for their Easter Breakfast and made a profit of \$343 that they can now use for youth events or service projects. Together, that's \$1250 in free money that was put to good use in Jesus' name.

Thrivent Action Teams really make a difference! These \$250 awards enable us to live more fully into our mission of serving others so that they know Jesus because these awards allow us to support projects without drawing from our budget. These awards also allow us to dream big about caring for our neighbors and our resources. If you are a Thrivent member and would like to sponsor another event, please contact Pastor Emily. If you would like to become a Thrivent member so that you can make more dreams a reality, then please contact Doug Lohmeier.

Tender Mercies

The next Bingo event is planned for October.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating. We can always use extra bodies to help out.

As always, we are in need of items for our gift baskets. No donation is too large or too small. If you are interested in making baked goods for the residents, please let me know. We are in need of brownies, Rice Krispie Treats and home-made cookies. We will be serving sub-sandwiches with chips, baked goods and assorted drinks. We have great gift baskets and the residents love to see us. It's a great opportunity to help the less fortunate.

You can drop off/donate any items at St. Paul.

*My contact info is –
houdinicat@cinci.rr.com home email
513-251-2417 home phone
513-236-5385 cell phone*

Can't wait to hear from you - Marie Calhoun

Seniors Flying Solo

On Wednesday, September 14, we want to join other members of the church in viewing *God Isn't Dead 2*. The film deals with a young woman who is forced to defend her faith. Afterwards, Pastor Emily will lead a discussion about the film and its implications for all Christians. Meet at the church at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, September 14, for this "must see" film.

Don't forget about the new production of the Church Basement Ladies at LaComedia in March of 2017! We have reservations for 20 on Friday, March 9. Cost is \$38. Make plans to join us.

~Elinor Schieman

Thank You!

Thank you one and all for the surprise reception on Sunday, August 21, which marked the one-year anniversary of our ministry together!

Your affirmation of my call, expressed in-person and in letters, was very moving. Taylor and I were both very touched by the care that you extended to him, Henry, and me.

The engraved pectoral cross is such a special gift! As I wear it, I carry all of you and the ministry which you have entrusted to me with me.

I thank God for calling me to St. Paul's, for it is a great joy to serve you. We have been through a lot together this year, as our congregation has faced many challenges, but God has faithfully provided for us through all of you. God has faithfully led us through this year and blessed us even in the midst of uncertainty. Through all of you, I have experienced Jesus, and I have a greater sense of God's enduring love and faithfulness.

God will continue to lead us. No matter what this next year brings, we can go forward in hope because the Triune God goes with us. I look forward to discovering together what God's dreams are for this congregation and for the mission he has given us.

In Christ, Pastor Emily Beckering

Dorcas Circle

The "girls" are making the last of the quilts for Lutheran World Relief. To make as many as possible, we have added a work day in September. We plan to meet on Wednesday, September 7, as well as our usual day, September 21.

Remember the QUILT RAFFLE. Tickets will be sold during the entire month of September and the first Sunday of October--\$4 each ticket or 3 tickets for \$12. All the quilts will be displayed in the sanctuary on Sunday, October 2, when the winning tickets will be drawn. Proceeds will be sent to Lutheran World Relief to aid in the shipment of quilts to their final destinations.

~ Elinor Schieman

Altar Bells and Thurible Added to Our Worship

The next Sunday that you are in worship, you may notice some exciting additions. On Sunday, August 28th, we will use the rite of *General Order of Blessing* in order to dedicate altar bells and a thurible and incense boat, which are given by Ron and Carole Replogle in loving memory of Carole's mother, Helen Baldauf.

The altar bells will be rung after the welcome/ announcements each Sunday in order to call us to worship so that we settle our hearts and minds to receive God's Word. The altar bells will also be rung at the beginning of the Meal, to call us back from sharing the Peace and to prepare us to give our offering in Jesus' name.

The thurible is used to burn incense, and is sometimes called the censer. "Thurible" comes from Latin *thuribulum*, from *thur-*, *thus* incense, from Greek *thyos incense, sacrifice*, and so means "carrier of incense." The Church's tradition (including Lutheran tradition) of burning incense is Scripturally-based and comes from Psalm 141:2: "Let my prayer rise as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice." We light incense as a visual and fragrant witness that God is with us when we gather for worship and God hears our prayers. We will use the thurible on the principal festivals of the church year like Easter and All Saints Sunday.

God's goodness will be evident in these elements of worship, for their sound and smell will proclaim God's love and presence to us. We will experience God's goodness with all of our senses! Given in loving memory, they also remind us that we will be reunited at the Resurrection with Helen, and with all of our beloved dead.

FAITH AND FILM

If you saw *God's Not Dead*, then you won't want to miss the sequel, *God's Not Dead 2*. A description of the movie is below:

High school history teacher Grace Wesley (Melissa Joan Hart) comes under fire for answering a student's (Hayley Orantia) question about Jesus. When Grace refuses to apologize, the school board votes to suspend her and threatens to revoke her teaching certificate. Forced to stand trial to save her career, Grace hires young lawyer Tom Endler (Jesse Metcalfe) to defend her in court. Endler devises a powerful strategy to show the jury the historical significance of Wesley's classroom discussion.

We will hold two showings of the film and discuss the movie and its relevancy to how we live out our faith in our daily lives.

The two showings will be Wednesday, September 14 at 1:00 pm, and an evening in September that has yet to be determined based on the schedules of those interested. If you want to participate, but can't come to the matinee at church on September 14, then let Pastor Emily know so that we can coordinate the date of the second screening.

September Ministry Schedule

If you are unable to serve as scheduled below, then please arrange for a replacement.

Thank you!

- 4** **16th Pentecost**
Assisting Minister: Taylor Beckering
Reader: Kathy Hirt
Acolyte: Katie Sturgill
Communion Ministers: Elinor Schieman; Ron and Shirley Harbaugh
- 11** **17th Pentecost**
Assisting Minister: Nancy Erbeck
Reader: Terri Deangelis
Acolyte: Cole Isaacs
- 18** **18th Pentecost**
Assisting Minister: Leandra Hawkins
Reader: Sherry Bronner
Acolyte: Annie Lohmeier
Communion Minister: Terry McDowell
- 25** **19th Pentecost**
Assisting Minister: Terry McDowell
Reader: Carroll Mayhugh
Acolyte: Grant Lohmeier

Greeters: Linda Lawson & Steve Headley

Bulletin Folders: Jean Winkle & Penny Huber

Altar Guild: Shirley Harbaugh, Linen
Carol Replogle, Set Up
Shirley Harbaugh, Clean Up

JOIN THE CHOIR

Positions Open: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass -- No others need apply.

Physical Qualifications: Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the church. Must have sufficient vision to see director 20 feet away.

Experience: No application accepted from persons who have not sung, hummed, or whistled in the tub or shower.

Wages: Satisfaction and joy in God's service.

Fringe Benefits: Social Security -- we promise you the security of social fellowship with other member of the choir.

Hours: Sunday mornings with occasional opportunities for overtime (at above-mentioned wages).

Vacation: Missed rehearsals and church services are primarily a matter of conscience and ability to return the glares and pointed remarks of the director and other choir members.

Retirement: No particular age, but it is generally determined by prayer, printed notes getting too small, notes too high, church too hot (or cold), or organist unable to play the notes you sing. Rehearsals: Once a week, except in the summer.

Apply: By attending a rehearsal.

CELEBRATIONS IN SEPTEMBER

5	Susan Bardes
9	Lee Erbeck
	Olivia Hedges
11	Hailie Fuller
	Carole Replogle
14	Paul Pieper
19	Jim & Loretta Forst -anniversary
21	Rita Edwards
30	John Kerlin



ITEM OF THE MONTH

For the month of September, please **Paper Towels**. Place them under the giving tree in the narthex. We'd love to be able to donate 100 items per month!

Our Life Together

For emergency pastoral care, please call Pastor Emily Beckering, 513-760-5884.

If you have requests for the Prayer Chain, call Penny Huber, 513-931-6420. To remove people from the list, contact the office.

We pray for **Mary and her granddaughter Kyra** (friend of Paul Pieper); **Berkeley** (great-grandson of the Curlesses); **Jimmy Bertheaud** (friend of the Portmanns); **Lily Cole** (aunt of David Hill and Chrissy Harris); **Debbie, Steve, Jessica Davis** (friends of Holly Ford); **Amberly Derby** (friend of Molly McDowell); **Jeremy Doan** (Jean Winkle's grandson); **Jerry Doan** (Jean Winkle's son-in-law); **Kathy Downie** (Sieckman's neighbor); **Bus Faulkner; Larry Faulkner** (Bus and Freda's son); **Les Helmich**; Les Helmich's children **Bruce and Elaine**; **Greg Hershey** (cousin of Steve Headley); **Sandy Hill** (sister-in-law of David Hill); **Matt Huber** (Penny Huber's son); **Karen Kerlln; Jay King** (son of Jamie King, who cleans the church); **Steve Koller** (brother/in-law of Adam and Kathy Pirrmann); **Loretta Kombrink** (Marilyn Portmann's aunt); **Charlotte Langefeld; Doug Meyers' Family** (friends of the Portmanns); **David Oaks** (son-in-law of Bus Faulkner); **Craig Olsen** (friend of the Sieckmans); **Edward and Elain Peterson** (brother and sister-in-law of Shirley Harbaugh); **William Pratley** (friend of Pastor Emily); **Sarah Rupert** (Carolyn Koehl's sister); **James Savory** (Jean Winkle's great-grandson); **Pauline Schauer** (cousin of Cindy Sieckman); **Michael Schmitt** (Jean Winkle's son-in-law); **Kim Sieckman; the Silva Family** (daughter and son-in-law of Tammy Trees); **Jason Simpson** (grand-nephew of Bus and Freda Faulkner); **Speedy Sizemore** (friend of Marie Calhoun); **Scott Songer** (friend of Jean Winkle); **Crosley Spelman** (grandson of Jack and Joyce Spelman); **Audrey Stuart** (sister of Rita Edwards); **Bill Swallender** (in-law of the Millers); **Britney Jean Teems** (Jean Winkle's granddaughter); **Irene Waddle; Debbie Willet** (co-worker of Holly Ford); **Susan Winkle** (daughter-in-law of Jean Winkle); **Anna Louise Witker** (Carolyn Koehl's mother).

We pray for those with ongoing health concerns who are unable to come to church every week: **Bernice Baglien, Dottie Bangert, Norm Dageforde, Pat Edwards, Bus Faulkner, Mary Jane Flege, Ruth Jones, Carol Leonard, Marge Malin, Jack and Barbara Moorhouse, Jean Nolte, Heather Segar, Edna Willet.**

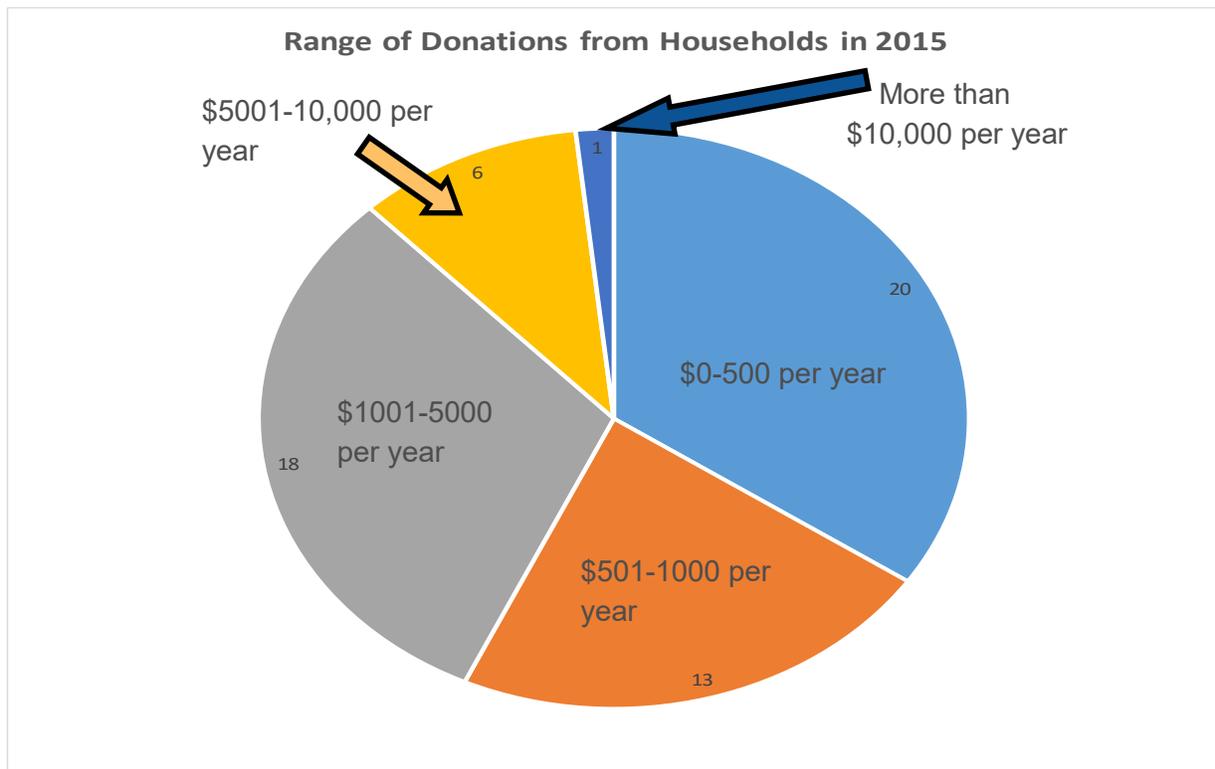
We pray for our armed forces members: **Paul Cordes** (grandson of Elinor Schieman); **Jared Forst** (grandson of Jim and Loretta); **John Garbrecht** (nephew of Carolyn Koehl); **Beau Glenn** (son-in-law of Karen Koehl); **Kylie Hahn** (granddaughter of Gretta Hahn); **Donald Hosea** (son of Karen Koehl); **Kyle Murdoch** (friend of Holly Ford); **Jobeth Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Joshua Rodriguez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Mack Thompson** (grandson of Freda and Bus Faulkner); **Mylan Watkins** (friend of the Ford family).

At the death of: **Juanita Thiele**, the wife of the late Rev. Kenneth Theile (former son of the congregation--ordained at St. Paul). Ken & Juanita were both missionaries in New Guinea for many years. Juanita passed away on Friday, August 12, 2016. The memorial service was on Tuesday, August 16, 2016 at Messiah Lutheran Church, Cincinnati. Memorials can be made to the Chapel Fund at Maple Knoll Village or City Gospel Mission in Cincinnati, OH.

Our Giving Patterns

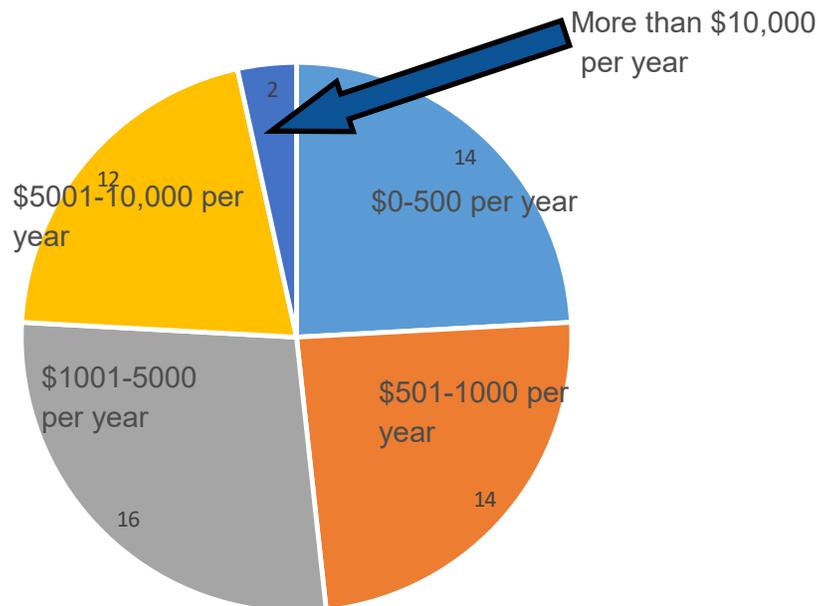
At the beginning of this issue, you read Nelson Langefeld's invitation to complete our *Estimate of Giving Card* and return it to church by Reformation Sunday, October 30, so that the Council can plan a budget supported by our giving.

As you are prayerfully determining your estimated giving amount in 2017, consider the following data. The pie charts display the number of households giving within the range of donations specified in 2015 and 2016.



The number of households giving in each donation range changed between 2015-2016. For example, you can see from these charts that the number of giving units (households) giving St. Paul's between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year and those households giving more than \$10,000 per year *both* doubled from 2015 to 2016!

Range of Donations from Households in 2016



At the end of the second quarter of 2015, total inflows were at \$33,090.21. At the end of the second quarter of this year, total inflows were at \$85,910.53. That increase *does* include memorials given in honor of our beloved dead in 2016 as well as donations to the delinquent tax fund, but current expense giving in weekly envelopes through the second quarter also increased from \$26,428 in 2015 to \$60,207 in 2016. Across the board, giving is up significantly from last year! That speaks to the Holy Spirit's movement among us, stirring up excitement and passion for God's work at St. Paul's.

This data is supplied, not so that we compare ourselves to others, but so that we can take responsibility for our own personal giving patterns and see how we each contribute to the whole. We fund the mission of this congregation together, and so that mission is dependent on each of us.

(Continued on page 10)

We know that we need about \$180,000 a year to pay all of our regular-occurring bills that enable us to have a building, staff, and the resources so that we can gather each week to worship, to grow in our walk with Jesus, and to serve others. We are faithful to God's calling in our lives by giving to these reoccurring expenses because in paying these bills, we ensure that we have a place where the Gospel continues to be proclaimed in worship so that we are equipped to proclaim it throughout the week.

What might happen, however, if we could move beyond our bills and reach even farther beyond our walls? What might God do through us if we can each let go of a little more of what we have? It wouldn't even take much to do amazing things! There are currently 58 giving units at St. Paul's giving regularly: if each of our households gave just \$5 more a month, that would be \$3,480 a year that could be put to use in serving others in Jesus' name. If we each gave \$5 more a week, that would be an additional \$13,920 a year! If those of us who haven't yet contributed financially to our mission could strive to do so in 2016, then we could have 60 or 65 or 70 giving units and we could increase our total giving exponentially. We could launch a whole new ministry! We could answer prayers in transformative ways! Think of the witness we could give; people outside our walls could know that Jesus is alive—that God hears their prayers and is at work for them.

For some of us, an additional \$5 a week is not financially possible, but perhaps we could manage to give \$5 more a month. For some of us, an additional \$5 a week would be no problem at all, and we could manage to give an additional \$10 a week or more.

Giving isn't easy; when we give, we inevitably feel the twinge of separation from our money and often think of what else we could do with it if we didn't give it to God. That's why giving is a spiritual discipline, and all of us—no matter how fixed or small our income—are called by God to give from what God has given us so that we practice trusting the Triune God to give us what we need, and so that we get to experience the joy of blessing others. Our "offering" is a sacrifice each week that we make for the sake of the kingdom. When we say "yes" to God, we inevitably say "no" to ourselves or to other causes. As the widow gives her mite and is praised by Jesus (Luke 21:1-4), so God rejoices when we give freely to fund the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world.

Let us each consider how we might stretch ourselves so that we might say "yes" to God and do even more for his kingdom in 2017.

In Christ, Pastor Emily Beckering

Christian Education

We are gearing up for another year of nurturing and growing in our Christian Faith.

Rally Day is Sunday, September 11th.

Our Intergenerational Sunday School rotation will begin after Rally Day and will follow this pattern in 2016-2017:

1st Sunday: Intergenerational Bible Study

2nd Sunday: Community Breakfast

3rd Sunday: Intergenerational Service Project

4th Sunday: Adult Forums focusing on Communication, Strengthening Relationships, and Visioning our Mission

Children will participate in a craft and game the 4th Sunday of the month

RALLY DAY!

We kick off the 2016-2017 Christian Education year on **Sunday, September 11 at 9:30 am.**

Our theme this year is "Strengthening our Congregational Life through Building Community and Bonds."

We will start strengthening our relationships with a **Community Breakfast** and team-building games for the whole family.

The intergenerational Sunday School is intended for the whole congregation, not just families with children, so come to Rally Day and plan to attend Sunday School each Sunday this year so that we might grow in our relationship with Jesus together.

Ice Cream Social

The Evangelism Committee will host an ice cream social on **Saturday, September 17 at 2:00 pm.**

This event helps us to provide hospitality to our neighbors here in Reading. We hope it also gives us a chance to begin to build relationships with them so that we might experience Jesus through one another.

Invite your neighbors and friends to attend. Free ice cream and games/crafts for all!

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Reverend Emily Beckering, Pastor
Barry L. Prince, Director of Music
Janet King, Sacristan
Dennis King, Financial Secretary
David Hill, Drama Ministry Director

President, Nancy Erbeck

Vice President and Christian Education, Diana Hawkins

Secretary and Music and Worship, Carole Replogle

Treasurer and Finance, Linda Miller

Stewardship, Jim Forst

Social Concerns, Penny Huber

Property, Dennis King

Evangelism, Pat Coldiron

St. Paul Lutheran Church

A Congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

106 Maple Street
Reading, OH 45215
(513) 821-0987

mail@stpaulreading.org

stpaulpastor@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at
www.stpaulreading.org

9:30 am Intergenerational
Sunday School

10:30 am Worship

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE