

The Epistle

We're All Marked Up

The Marks of the Church



What makes **a** church **the** church?

The building? The programs and ministries? Its location? The style of worship? The people? The leadership? The number of worshippers and size of the Sunday School?

People may choose to worship in a congregation or become a member of a particular church for the reasons listed above, and yet, none

of these features are what makes a church the church—that which makes one congregation authentically part of the one holy, Christian church.

The Augsburg Confession is the statement of faith written by Philip Melancthon on behalf of the leaders whose faith convictions were aligned with Martin Luther's, and which was presented to the emperor, Charles V, and the assembled princes and representatives of imperial cities in 1530. In this Confession, Article VII, "Concerning the Church," the Church

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VALLEY INTER-FAITH ITEM OF THE MONTH

The Social Concerns committee is resuming Item of the Month collection for Valley Interfaith Community Resource Center, where we collect one type of household necessity each month.

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is defined as “the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached, and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.”

The two most central marks of the Church, therefore, are that the assembly of believers (1) proclaim Jesus Christ crucified and risen and (2) offer Baptism and Holy Communion for the forgiveness of sin and salvation.

The distinguishing mark of the body of Christ is not perfection! It is Christ!

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This month's items are **shampoo and conditioner**. Thank you for your generosity!

This truth is freeing and clarifying—there is much that we can feel responsible for and to, and many good things that we can do together and for the world, and yet, what is most central is preaching the good news that Jesus Christ died and lives so that all might have forgiveness of sin and life with God now and forever.

The last year has left many exhausted, emotionally and physically. It is draining of life through a constant state of change and uncertainty. We may feel all marked up as a consequence of living through the pandemic, or as the consequence of mistakes made or flaws, but it turns out that you're also marked in a very positive way.

During the pandemic, you continued to offer these gifts to each other and to all who tuned in to our worship services. Even as we adapted as was necessary for safety, we continued to find ways to proclaim Jesus' forgiveness through Word, song, and Holy Communion.

This summer, you have proclaimed Christ's love and forgiveness to the children and parents who attended VBS and to the families and friends who came for the funerals of our

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beloved Doris Minton and Paul Pieper. You showed the hospitality of Christ to our neighbors at the Community Movie Night and to a man who needed a place to have a celebration of life reception for his late wife. I've been told stories by members of how they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit because a brother or sister in Christ at St. Paul's prayed for them, consoled them in a time of grief, or offered to come with them to the bedside of their ill parent.

Well done, good and faithful servants. God bless you!

You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, marked with the cross of Christ forever, and it shows.

In Christ,
Pastor Emily Beckering

Celebrations in August



- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Bess Sturgill | 15 | Kirstyn Kreiner |
| 4 | Noah Smith-Trondle | 16 | Kyra Cowan, Maci Lawson, Tom Pyle |
| 6 | Carolyn Koehl | 19 | Ed & Kathy Hirt |
| 7 | Ryan Coulehan | 22 | Doug & Marty Lohmeier |
| 8 | Jeff & Holly Ford | 23 | Charlotte Waddell |
| 10 | Webb Grandy,
Anna Smith-Trondle | 24 | Rodney Bronner,
Pat Coldiron |
| 11 | James Dageforde | 26 | Bob Portmann |
| | | 28 | David & Amanda Peery |
| | | 31 | Mark Burgjohann,
Cole Grieger |



CAR WASH FUNDRAISER AUG. 14

On August 14 from 10 until 2 PM, the youth group will hold a car wash fundraiser to help raise money to attend the [ELCA Youth Gathering](#) next July.

Youth will gather for an early get-together after the car wash so that we don't have to come back in the evening.

Chelsea King
Donald Harris



First Fruits

Fruits of the Spirit alive at St. Paul!

You Want the Truth? God is Faithful.

THE FAITH AND LIFE OF DOTTIE DELOATCH MEMBER OF ST. PAUL LUTHERAN SINCE 2018

Life hasn't always been easy for Dottie.

She was born during World War II and was one of eleven children. They lived on a farm in a rural community in North Carolina. Her mother made her dresses from flour sacks. There were cracks in the floors through which she could see from the upstairs down to the main level, but it was the cracks that allowed the heat to rise and warm the bedrooms. There were times when money was so tight that if her grandfather had not brought food over from his larger farm, then Dottie and her siblings would have starved.

Dottie remembers her childhood fondly.

How can this be? She didn't have everything, but she had everything she needed. Though they were poor in money, they were rich in love, in family, in the Lord.

Love for God, for family, and for her country formed a foundation for the rest of life. It was that support system of family, school and community, and church through which the Lord provided for Dottie and her family time and time again. Without fail, when they were in need, a neighbor or relative would bring them food. In turn, when Dottie's family's harvest thrived, they shared with those who were in need. Dottie has distinct memo-

ries of her mother feeding more than one hungry traveler who knocked on the door and asked for food. No matter the circumstances or how trying the times, Dottie's parents rested on Sundays—it was a family day—and they gave an offering each Sunday.

From the model of her parents, Dottie learned that everything is a gift from God: "We don't earn or deserve anything we have—and so when we give an offering, we are just giving back to God what God has first given us."

From these experiences, Dottie learned that she could truly trust that God would always be there for her. True to His Word, God always has been. God sustained her through an intense nursing program, through several geographical relocations during her marriage, through the death of her husband, and the closing of her church home of over 40 years, Roselawn Lutheran Church.

At the invitation of sisters in Christ, Shirley Lathrop and Maryhelen West, Dottie joined St. Paul Lutheran Church in 2018 along with dear friend Tom Pyle, and together they have been a blessing to this congregation ever since. Even in the loss

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First Fruits

Fruits of the Spirit alive at St. Paul!

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of her church home of 40 years, God still provided what she needed, for Dottie believes wholeheartedly that God led her to St. Paul's, knowing that she needed this congregation. Sure enough, after walking into the hospitality of this congregation, "It felt like home." St. Paul Lutheran is now a home and a family; a need which we all have, and a need that has been met here for Dottie.

Through this congregation, God provides for Dottie, just as He has her whole life long: "He promised He would never leave us or forsake us, and he doesn't. He's with us always, always, always. We need the truth and who does the Bible say is Truth?

Jesus. Jesus is the Truth, and He is faithful."

Dottie's life is a testament that Jesus keeps His promises.

Life hasn't always been easy for Dottie, but it has been good. It has been good because God is good, and He is Faithful.

To hear more of Dottie's story, tune in to worship on Sunday, August 1, and look for daily emails and social media posts during the week of August 2-6 featuring new video clips of her testimony. The Fruits of the Spirit of God are alive at St. Paul's!

Changes to our Online Giving App

IF YOU USE THE GIVEPLUS APP ON YOUR PHONE, READ THIS!

Vanco, our eGiving provider, has launched an updated mobile app called Vanco Mobile to replace GivePlus Mobile.

You can download the Vanco Mobile app for free from the App Store or Google Play. From there, you can make a one-time donation or set up recurring giving right through the app. Just select your fund and amount, enter a payment method and complete the donation. There is a flyer on the next page with a peek at the new app.

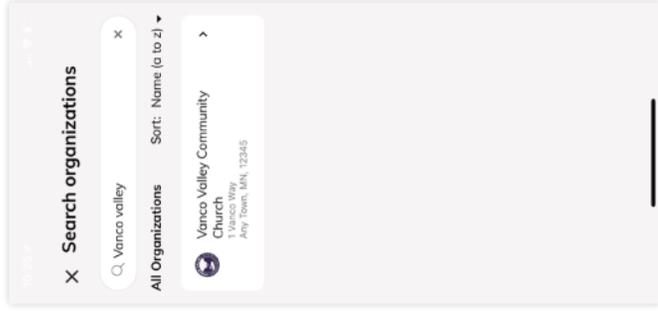
Please download Vanco Mobile by September 30. Vanco will be retiring GivePlus Mobile after this date.

If you have questions or need assistance with online giving, please contact the church office or call Dennis King at (513) 378-5464.

More info about online giving can be found on the website at stpaulreading.org/online-giving/.

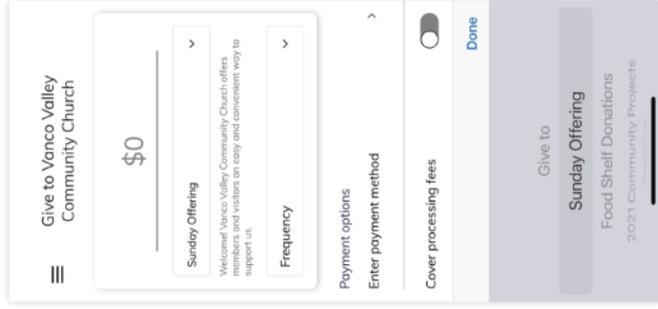
HOW TO GIVE USING VANCO MOBILE

Support our ministries from anywhere. Go to the App Store or Google Play to download the Vanco Mobile app for free.



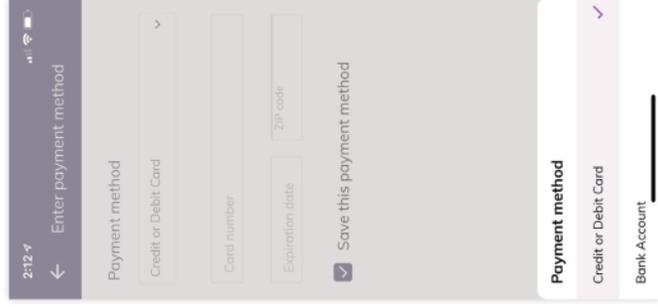
1. Search for Our Church

Enter our church's name or use the invite code and click **Search**. Then, select our church.



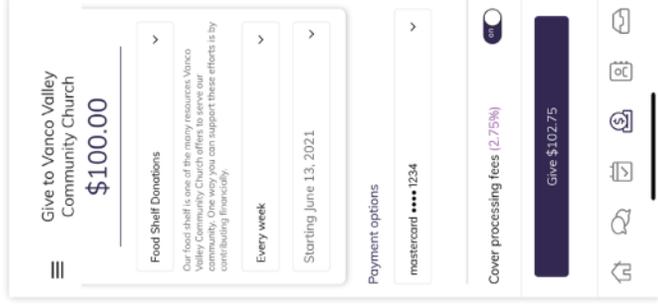
2. Select Your Fund and Amount

Select your fund and donation frequency, then select your payment method.



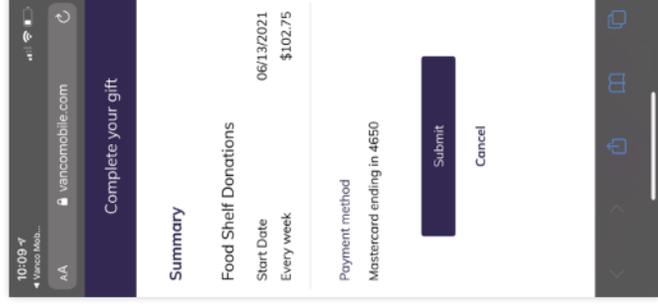
3. Enter Payment Method

Select a payment method and enter your credit card, debit card or bank account information. You can save this payment method for future donations.



4. Choose to Cover Processing Fees

You can choose to cover the donation processing fees by adding a small amount on top of your gift. Click the button to opt in.



5. Complete Your Donation

Review and complete your gift by clicking **Submit**.

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Empowered to Empower Others: Mission Support at School

In 2020, we shared 3% (\$5,050) of our offerings for Mission Support through the Southern Ohio Synod. Here is a story of how our Mission Support raises up leaders in the Church throughout the world. More at livinglutheran.org/SOFIA.



Leaving her home in Suriname for Augsburg University, Minneapolis, Sarah Abendanon felt frightened and excited.

“Before my departure for the U.S., I was a very insecure girl,” she

recalled.

Abendanon’s home church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname, had endorsed her to pursue her bachelor’s degree in the United States through the ELCA’s International Women Leaders (IWL) program.

Since graduating in May 2018, Abendanon has found work as a publications officer, started her own small business and volunteered her marketing skills to her church. She credits her Augsburg education as invaluable. “I came back much more confident,” she said.

Abendanon is one of 39 young women who have received IWL scholarships, awarded through partnerships with 11 ELCA colleges and universities. The scholarships continue for the duration of their bachelor’s degree programs.

Thanks to the generosity of ELCA members during and after *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, all the women’s expenses are covered, “a type of scholarship that’s extremely rare these days,” said Kaleb Sutherland, director, International Leaders program for scholarship administration and

student engagement. “The idea is to remove any barriers for students to access this opportunity.”

Mission Support dollars fund IWL program administration and help to support ELCA companion churches, some of which encourage young women to apply for IWL.

Yuen Ching Lee graduated from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, in 2019 with the help of an IWL scholarship. She was endorsed by her home church, the Lutheran Church in Malaysia.

Originally from Selangor, Malaysia, Lee said studying in the United States “broadened my mind and mindset to what things and society could be like, especially when it comes to women empowerment and going against patriarchy.”

Today, Lee is a teacher for a Malaysian non-profit, Dignity for Children Foundation, that educates underprivileged youth to pursue careers that could lift them out of poverty.



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Around the ELCA: Mission Support, Bishop's Corner

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Sutherland noted that the ELCA designed IWL to accompany young women from ELCA companion churches in the hope that they would return to their communities and churches to pursue their vocations with confidence. Recent graduates such as Abendanon and Lee are thriving.

“I continue to do the work of the [church] and the IWL program [by using] my gifts and talents,” Abendanon said. “And I pass it on by helping [my] neighbors wherever I can. No matter where we are and where we are from. We are one.”

From the Presiding Bishop: “A Deeply Spiritual Act”

This article was originally published in the June 2021 issue of Living Lutheran magazine.

The first-century church in Corinth must have been a lively place. Its members were competitive, jealous, divided into factions and litigious. The congregation was diverse. There were Jews and gentiles, rich and poor, men and women, young and old, those brand new to the faith and those with more maturity.

Paul spent over 18 months establishing the church in Corinth. He worked with, lived with and loved these people. Paul wanted them to know the risen Christ and the life of love and freedom found in Christ.

While the Corinthians were enthusiastic, they weren't very disciplined. They argued about which of them had the superior spiritual pedigree—those baptized by Paul or those baptized by Apollos. They took each other to

court. And when they gathered for the Lord's Supper—neither decently nor in good order—Paul wrote, “When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk” (1 Corinthians 11:20-21).

At his ascension, Jesus told his disciples that they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The church in Jerusalem was the foundation of the Christian movement. It became the parent of the churches founded by the apostles throughout the world.

The decision had been taken at the Council at Jerusalem to welcome gentiles into the way of Jesus. This was a critically important decision and a difficult one. It wasn't universally embraced by everyone. And the saints in Jerusalem had fallen on hard times. Famine threatened the city. Paul organized a massive stewardship campaign among the gentile churches to send aid to the church in Jerusalem.

Paul would have done well as a development officer. He urged the believers to give generously and cheerfully. He set them up to compete with each other to see which church could be most generous. The enthusiastic Corinthians jumped at the chance, especially if they could do better than the Macedonians! But their lack of discipline was stronger than their zeal, and their stewardship campaign faltered.

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Our Life Together

For emergency pastoral care, please call the after-hours line at 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 **Berkeley** (Carol Curless's great-grandson); **Jeannie Allen** (Faith Pirrmann's friend); **Pr. Lisa Bernheisel; Louise Barry; Teresa Bell** (former member); **Chrissi Bergt** (Kate Wollenburg's cousin); **Beth** (Elinor Schieman's daughter); **Stephen Black** (Kim Coulehan's nephew); **Bobby** (Christian Lohmeier's friend); **Nancy Bose** (Kathy Hirt's friend); **Brett** (Kings' step-nephew); **Nicole Bucknam** (friend of Millers); **Jodie Calhoun; Ann Cathcart** (Laines' daughter-in-law); **Christian; Frances Clemons** (Portmanns' friend); **Sandy Cordes; Kathy Curless; Katie Demopoulos** (Diana Hawkins's niece); **Jeremy Doan** (Jean Winkle's grandson); **Lee and Jane Erbeck; Larry Faulkner** (Freda's son); **Justin Feldman** (Bess Sturgill's father); **Micki Ford** (Fords' niece); **Lee Frank** (Barbara Moorhouse's niece's husband); **Jeanne Fuller; Scarlett Gally** (Beth Wernery's great-niece); **Clara Garcia** (Cindy Mayhugh's sister); **Nathaniel Gibson** (Les Eckerle's step-nephew); **Steve Gollehon** (Elinor Schieman's cousin); **Jim Hammerling** (Portmanns' son-in-law); **Hannah; Matthew Harrison** (Seals' neighbor); **Sandy Hatcher** (Linda Holt's sister); **Elain Heskamp; Richard Hoffman** (Cindy Mayhugh's brother); **Andrew Horton; Ellen Hunter** (Jeni Cathcart's grandmother); **Jo and her daughter** (Jeanne Fuller's friends); **Joan** (Penny Huber's friend); **Kate** (granddaughter of Dennis King's friend); **Ken Keith** (Kris Keith's dad); **Dennis King; Loretta Kombrink** (Marilyn Portmann's aunt); **Lewis Laine** (Chet Laine's brother); **Richard Lane** (Elinor Schieman's nephew); **Nelson Langefeld; Ruth Lohmeier; Yvonne Lowery** (St. Paul Players); **Carroll Mayhugh Sr.** (Carroll Mayhugh's father); **Cindy Mayhugh; Samantha Mersch** (Mayhughs' daughter, Sarah Papin's sister); **Mary Mills** (St. Paul Players); **Jessica Mink** (Donald Harris's cousin); **Barbara Moorhouse; Jean Nolte; Ervin, Carol, Jim, and Jeannie Oerther** (Portmanns' sister and family); **Ann Ohr** (Barbara Moorhouse's cousin); **Rich-**

ard Osborn (Betty Pack's brother); **Rosie Osborn** (Betty Pack's sister); **Tom Pack** (Betty Pack's son); **Eric Papin; Christian & Suzie Pereira** (Carolyn Koehl's granddaughter & grandson-in-law); **Ginny Pape; Linda Perin** (Moorhouses' cousin); **Faith Pirrmann; Pat Popplewell** (Dennis King's friend); **James Savoy** (Jean Winkle's great-grandson); **Scott Schadel** (friend of McDowell's); **Shawn Schnetzer** (Sturgills' cousin); **Sheila Schultz** (Betty Pack's friend); **Shannon and Dane** (friends of Riddle family); **Shear family** (Kings' daughter & son-in-law); **Kate Sheridan** (Kings' family friend); **Keith Shupe** (father of Kelly Shupe); **Jason Simpson** (Freda Faulkner's grand-nephew); **Scott Songer; Judy Songer** (friends of Jean Winkle); **Crosley Spelman** (Spelmans' grandson); **Frank Sturgill** (Jim's dad); **Britney Jean Teems** (Jean Winkle's granddaughter); **Randy Thaman** (friend of Marie Calhoun); **Geri Toland** (Carole Replogle's neighbor); **Treasure** (Les Eckerle's cousin); **Ralph Turner** (friend of Dennis King); **Tereasa Vogel** (Freda Faulkner's friend); **Jack Wagner; Jeanne Wagner; Daryl Wesselman** (Betty Pack's granddaughter); **Jean Winkle; Susan Winkle** (Jean Winkle's daughter-in-law).

At the death of: **Paul Pieper.**

We pray for those with ongoing health concerns who are unable to come to church every week: **Louise Barry, Barbara Moorhouse, Jean Nolte, Heather Segar.**

We pray for our armed forces members: **Graham Barton** (Fords' neighbor); **Paul Cordes** (Elinor Schieman's grandson); **Victoria Derry** (Elinor Schieman's great-granddaughter); **Jared Forst** (Loretta's grandson); **Beau Glenn** (Karen Koehl's son-in-law); **Kylie Hahn** (Gretta Hahn's granddaughter); **Donald Hosea** (Karen Koehl's son); **Samuel McLoughlin** (friend of Cindy Sieckman); **Scott Minton** (Becky Betsch's brother); **Jobeth Ramirez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Joshua Rodriguez** (friend of Karen Koehl); **Trent Schwegman** (cousin to the Erbecks and Fords); **Dustin Silvey; Mack Thompson** (Freda Faulkner's grandson); **Alex Wisecup** (son of Nadine and Barry Wisecup).

From the Presiding Bishop: “A Deeply Spiritual Act”

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Paul wasn't going to have it. In his second letter to the Corinthians, he laid out the spiritual basis for giving: it was about opening the self and the community, it was about glorifying God, it was a new way of thinking about sufficiency.

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

The concept of sufficiency had changed over the centuries. In Cynic and Stoic philosophy, true self-sufficiency was attained when a person became completely independent, with no need of anyone or anything else. By the time Paul wrote to the church in Corinth,

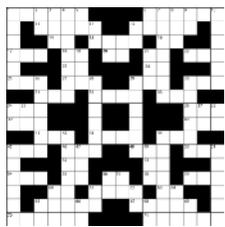
self-sufficiency meant not just having enough for oneself but having enough to give away to others. One could have all the wealth and power and status in the world, but if one didn't share with others, that person was not self-sufficient. Contrast the rich young man who could give nothing away with the poor widow who gave everything. The rich young man went away grieving. The widow gave freely.

Stewardship is a deeply spiritual act. It moves us out of ourselves and toward the neighbor in need. It glorifies God. It brings freedom from wealth and status. It unclenches our hands and hearts. It lets us rest in the promise of God's abundance. We become cheerful givers.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop of the ELCA

“What a Nice Surprise!”

How your Offerings have provided for our Older, Wiser Sisters and Brothers at St. Paul's



This summer, we gifted members (some above the age of 80 and others who had not been able to worship in-person frequently) with cross-

word puzzles and a daily devotional as part of our new ministry for older adults made possible through increased generosity from you! Here are some of the thank you cards we received in response to this ministry—your generous offerings are strengthening faith and bringing joy!

Dear Friends of St. Paul's,
I love the puzzle book!!! What a nice surprise. It's nice to be remembered.
--Loretta Forst

Thank you for the large print Bible Word Search Book. —Sincerely, Joyce Spelman

Thank you for the large print Bible word search book. With weeding my flower garden and the book, I will be busy. You're not going to grade us on our word search, are you?! —Best wishes, Maryhelen West

**St. Paul
Lutheran
Church**

*Mission
Statement:*

Christians
using God's
gifts helping
others know
him.



*Kids writing "Wash Me" in the dust on your car?
Still have cicada spots on your windshield? The
youth group can help you out! See p. 3 for details.*

**St. Paul
Lutheran Church**

106 Maple St.
Reading, OH 45215

Phone:
513-821-0987

E-mail:
mail@stpaulreading.org

Website:
stpaulreading.org



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