



THE PROCLAIMER

July, Aug., & Sept. 2026

The mission of St. Paul Lutheran Church is to hear, share, and proclaim the Word of God.

Why Celebrating July 4th is a good thing...

‘Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time....’
(Winston Churchill, 11 November 1947).

As the USA turns 250 years old, Churchill’s words, spoken nearly 80 years ago, seem as relevant today as they have ever been. It’s also important to remember that our government, contrary to common understanding, is not a “pure democracy” devoted to simple majority rule, but is instead, a republic, where elected representatives govern using their best judgement, balancing the desires of the electorate with the goals of preserving the collective peace and security of the nation. Superficially, the differences between a democracy and a republic may seem trivial, but are not. The framers of the Constitution were worried about unfettered democracy, fearing what they called the “tyranny of the majority” – a majority imposing its will upon a minority, simply because it can. That is, four people can “gang up” on one or two, seize their property, and violate their individuality in any way they choose. Now it can be argued that laws exist in order to prevent this sort of thing, but this is not strictly true. For a majority can always pass laws making their behavior “legal”. Our Constitution was written specifically to guard against this outcome, making such tyranny extremely difficult to achieve. Thus, amendments require the approval of two thirds of the House and Senate, plus three fourths of the states to be adopted; and three coequal branches of government were setup to check the power of any one branch. Furthermore, the two houses of Congress were designed to limit the power of a simple majority – any action requiring the approval of both a majority of states (the Senate) and a “popular” majority (the House). In short, the entire Constitutional structure was intended to limit the possibility of a majority imposing its will on a minority. While no system is perfect, ours has stood for 250 years, and has arguably improved the lives, not only of US citizens, but of the world in general.

So why the civics lesson, and what does this have to do with Christian faith and the members of St. Paul Lutheran? The “civics lesson” is merely intended to remind us of how we got here, and how our system of government is intended to function. These issues are of concern to our faith and the Church in general, because many, in our country and around the world, would see our government fail – or be irrevocably altered. Either of these outcomes, from a pastoral perspective, would be tragic. While our nation has its “warts” and has certainly made many mistakes, the US is the only counterbalance to aggressive regimes like China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. And while our country may be too powerful militarily to overthrow directly, our system of government is susceptible from “within”, from those who would bend our laws to favor “rule” by simple majority. The immediate result of that action would be the creation of a socialistic state – a tragedy of immense consequence.

In theory, “socialism” doesn’t sound “bad” – people banding together to share resources, that even the weakest and most impoverished person may have a safety net. While this sounds admirable, implementation is the problem – for socialist systems ignore the reality of human sin, the very thing that makes “majority rule” a form of tyranny. Recent political debates illustrate this well. For instance, many politicians today argue that becoming a “billionaire” should be outlawed, that “no one can legitimately earn that much money” – that our system of government allows for such a thing means that it is either “broken” or “corrupt”. This is the basic socialist claim, based on the “politics of envy” and the “drumbeat” of injustice and governmental failure. The socialist “theory” thus pits a majority (i.e. those who are not billionaires) against the tiny minority who are. “And why not? Why do those people ‘need’ all that money?” Those who advocate for socialism promise to “take down” the “uber rich” and redistribute the wealth more equitably – once they are elected. Yet, in every socialist system, those who end up running the government effectively become the new “billionaires” – at least in terms of power, if not wealth. They get to decide what “equitable” means; who deserves what; how resources are to be distributed... The list goes on. So while the theory of socialism may sound “good”, in practice it is not. In socialist systems, the government

effectively becomes “all powerful”: the “source” of benefits and the “entity” that decides right and wrong. Thus a system, run by flawed human beings, in practice, becomes “god” – the thing people are to look to for all their needs, hopes, and even their futures. Having traveled extensively in the former Soviet Union, I have witnessed this and the effect it has on a population “first hand”. As a “feature” rather than a “side effect”, socialist systems inevitably produce a dependent class, just as certainly as they produce a “ruling” party – who identify their “needs” with that of the government, which “could not run without them”. And so, the party inevitably sees its existence as the ultimate “good”, taking whatever action necessary to preserve its power.

Being thus, the very definition of an “idol”, the false “god” of socialism outlaws the worship of any other “God”, or else acts to severely limit the practice of any “other faith”. Being false, idols (i.e. those who worship them) desperately seek to preserve the illusion. Therefore, the worship of any other God becomes intolerable. That China and the Soviet Empire acted to effectively ban Christian worship is a fact of history. The leaders of N. Korea chose an alternate path: openly proclaiming themselves “gods”. And while modern Russia is nominally Russian Orthodox, it’s only to the extent the “church” supports the state (Putin). Hitler attempted to coopt the German Lutheran Church in much the same way, dictating the topics of sermons and arresting pastors who refused to cooperate. Given that many in our society on both sides of the political “divide”, would silence speech they find “offensive”, the value of our right to speak and practice our religion of choice cannot be overstated. In our nation, we are free, not merely to support our government, but to criticize it when it acts ways inconsistent with our understanding of God, what we see as good and evil, and as right and wrong. No such “right” exists in Russia, let alone China, N. Korea, or Iran.

So is it “OK” to celebrate the 250th birthday of our nation? Absolutely! Like its citizens, the US is not perfect, and will never be perfect. Even so, the ideals enshrined in our Constitution are worthy of celebration: “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. While the practice of Christianity informed many of the signers of the Constitution, we are not, by definition, a Christian nation. For if the practice of a particular expression of Christianity ever became “official”, it would soon mirror the worst aspects of socialism – conflating governmental authority with religious authority. Even “Christianity” can become idolatrous, if faith is coopted a resource for power (as is happening in Russia). For Christians in the US to truly be free to worship as we choose, we must resist any attempt to establish a national “religion”, be it “Christian”, “socialist”, “liberal” or “conservative”. This is also why we must resist any attempt to convert our republic into a “tyranny” by majority, by “court packing”, “abolishing the electoral college”, or any other effort to gain permanent political power. The lure of power is a constant temptation for human beings. Our system of government was designed to resist it, however imperfectly.

Interim Pastor Mark Ward

SALUTE TO AMERICAN SUNDAY, JULY 5

We will celebrate America on July 5th with an All-American lunch following church. We would love for everyone to wear patriotic colors. Donations will cover the cost of food and remaining funds will be donated to the American Legion Post.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Vacation Bible School is July 20-22, 9AM-11:45 AM, at St. Paul Lutheran Church, hosted by Mason Global Methodist Church & co-hosted by St. Paul, FUMC, & Art Methodist Churches.



Children who will be in Kindergarten-6th grade in the 2026-2027 school year, and students entering 7-12th grade who are willing to volunteer, and adult volunteers, may register with the QR code or at the following link: <https://www.masonglobalmethodist.org/group-events>. Information is also available on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

ANNUAL FISH FRY

St. Paul Lutheran’s Annual Fish Fry will be held Sunday, August 30, immediately following the worship service. Plans are to serve fried catfish, potato salad, beans, hush puppies and a drink for a free-will offering. We encourage everyone to mark their calendar to attend.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER

- First communion and presentation of Bibles will take place on Sunday, September 13.
- Confirmation will begin in September.

INVITATION TO THE CROSS TRAILS MINISTRY FALL FESTIVAL



QUILT DONATIONS

We are asking for quilt donations for the Quilt Show & Auction that is held at the Fall Festival. If you or someone you know would like to donate a quilt, please scan the QR code to fill out the donation form. Please fill out the form for each quilt you plan to donate.



St. Paul’s Closet

St. Paul’s Closet: Volunteers Turning Generosity into Community Support
By Kathy Criado

For many years, St. Paul’s Closet has been much more than a thrift store. It has been a place where generosity, stewardship, and community come together to make a difference in the lives of Mason County residents.

Operated by volunteers from St. Paul Lutheran Church and the surrounding community, St. Paul’s Closet provides an avenue for gently used clothing, shoes, jewelry, linens, and other items to find new homes while extending the useful life of those goods. The ministry reflects the church’s commitment to being good stewards of God’s creation and serving neighbors in need.

What many shoppers may not realize is that behind every item on a rack or shelf are countless volunteer hours. Current volunteers sort donations, organize merchandise, greet customers, maintain the store, and ensure that St. Paul’s Closet remains a welcoming place for everyone who walks through its doors. Their dedication makes it possible for the store to operate week after week, year after year.

Just as importantly, today’s volunteers are continuing a legacy established by those who came before them. Over the years, many faithful individuals have given their time, energy, and talents to build and sustain this ministry. While some have retired from service and others have gone on to their eternal rest, their efforts laid the foundation that allows St. Paul’s Closet to continue serving Mason County today.

The impact of the thrift store extends far beyond its walls. Nearly all of the proceeds generated through sales are returned directly to the community through charitable giving and local outreach efforts. Among the primary beneficiaries is the Mason County Food Pantry, helping ensure that local families facing food insecurity receive assistance when they need it most. Through these contributions, every donation made to the store, every purchase, and every volunteer hour becomes an investment in the well-being of our community.

St. Paul’s Closet stands as a reminder that small acts of generosity can have a lasting impact. Whether donating items, shopping for a bargain, or volunteering time, community members become part of a mission that has

been serving Mason County for years and continues to bless others today.

St. Paul Lutheran Church extends its sincere appreciation to all who have supported St. Paul’s Closet throughout its history—past and present volunteers, donors, customers, and community partners. Their collective efforts have transformed a simple thrift store into a ministry that continues to share God’s love through service, stewardship, and care for neighbors in need.



Volunteers from St. Paul’s Closet, the thrift store operated by St. Paul Lutheran Church, were honored at an appreciation luncheon Sunday, June 7 at Nacho’s. Pictured (l.-r.) are volunteers Courtney Scantlin, Kathy Criado, Dreu Bearden, Javier Criado, Joe Keller, Shirley Keller, Cathy Grace, Linda Geistweidt, Paulette Keller, Terry Lehmberg, Bridget Langdale, Dana Dehlinger and Stephen Dehlinger.

St. Paul’s Closet is located across from the Lutheran church and is open to the public Saturday mornings from 9am -11am. Clothing, shoes and accessories for the whole family are all sold for \$1 per item.

MASON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY MINISTRY UPDATE

There are volunteer opportunities each month at the Mason County Food Pantry (mobile market help, packing dry and frozen goods in delivery boxes, home delivery, and produce pick up). Regular 2nd and 4th Monday distributions are not on the sign-up because churches and other organizations are doing that. Check the weekly email for sign up links and how to donate. *We appreciate all of your service to our community and would love to have you join us for a shift!- MCFP.*



In an effort to help support our local Mason County Food Pantry, St. Paul and local area churches will be stocking a list of staples on a regular basis. St. Paul will help with canned corn, peas and mixed vegetables. Donations of these canned goods can be dropped off in the Narthex each Sunday and placed in the donation box, or dropped off at the Church Office during office hours (Monday-Thursday, 8:30 AM-Noon). Thank you for helping us meet this need!

ST. PAUL CELEBRATES JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 10 Jeff Owen
- 15 Ann Mahnken
- 17 Clara Schmidt
- 22 Julian Gammill
- 26 Anden King
- 27 Merlina Gamel
- 30 Brandi Nobles

ST. PAUL CELEBRATES AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Shirley Keller
- 3 Chris Habecker
- 4 Telisa Valentine
- 6 T. Martin Parrish
- 10 Nelda Rasco
- 11 Penny Ruthven
- 14 Kirsten Allen
- 16 Helen Habecker
- 17 Marty Johnson
- 21 Del Roy Reichenau
- 22 Kate Gillespie
- 23 Mike Smith
- 24 Wesley Valentine
- 25 Mike Goff
- 28 Carlton Schmidt



ST. PAUL CELEBRATES SEPT BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Debbie Nebgen
- 2 Lori Allen
- 5 Cass Castillo
- 6 Harold Albers
- 7 Minnie Schmidt
- 9 Gene Geistweidt
- Chad Schmidt
- Toryn Tinney
- 21 Walton Grote
- Bob Vacek
- 28 Stephen Dehlinger
- 29 Jerry Bearden

If your birthday or a family member's birthday is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please let Deb Probst know @ 325-597-2832 or dcprobst@hotmail.com. Thank you for helping us with this project.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Chel Terrell and T McIntosh attended the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly in May via Zoom.
- Council approved donation to the Synod Assembly offering benefitting the Tiemann Endowment Fund for Leadership Development.
- Council approved participation in providing selected staples to the Mason County Food Pantry. Donations of canned corn, peas and mixed vegetables can be left in a special box in the Narthex or in the church office.

SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

January: Janet Schmidt/Julia Carter
February: Cindy Bowden/Del Roy Reichenau
March: Jeff Owen/Mark Lehmberg
April: Telisa Valentine/Joe Keller
May: Rachel Schmidt/Janet Schmidt
June: Nancy Brown/Jenna Jacoby
July: Helen Habecker/Misty Castillo
August: Jeff Owen/Brandi Nobles
September: Paulette Keller/Julia Carter
October: Tammy Parrish/Del Roy Reichenau
November: Telisa Valentine/Lynn Reichenau
December: Nancy Brown/Helen Habecker

SCHEDULE FOR USHERING

January: Jerry Bearden/Walt Reichenau
Rex & Connie Smith/Dennis Carter
February: Penny Ruthven/Glenn Nebgen
Debbie Nebgen/Bridget Langdale
March: Bill Grace/Cass Castillo
Cindy Bowden/Cathy Grace
April: Jerry Bearden/Del Roy Reichenau
Walt Reichenau/Mark Lehmberg
May: T McIntosh/Paulette Keller
Mike Goff /Stephen Dehlinger
June: Jim Bob Smith/Dennis Carter
Judy Lehmberg/Todd (Kristy) Tinney
July: Matt Schmidt /Joe Keller
Cynthia Bauer/Janette Tomlinson
August: T McIntosh/Mike Goff
Jerry Bearden/Cass Castillo
September: John Gillespie/Chad Schmidt
Nancy Brown/Bert Mahnken
October: LeEster Burch/Chris Habecker/Mike Parrish
Jeff Owen/Brandi Nobles
November: Mark Lehmberg/Nicholas Gierisch
Janet Schmidt/Youth
December: Jim Bob Smith/Josh Brooks
Cynthia Bauer/Jerry Bearden

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MARCH

Congregational Giving: \$24,633.35

Expenditures: \$29,554.84

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR APRIL

Congregational Giving: \$22,839.20

Expenditures: \$19,658.34

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MAY

Congregational Giving: \$17,151.66

Expenditures: \$20,612.54

FIRST & SECOND QUARTER MINISTRY PLAN

CONTRIBUTION GOAL: \$123,405.50

FIRST & SECOND QUARTER MINISTRY PLAN

PROJECTED CONTRIBUTIONS: \$125,805.58

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTORY
FOR JULY

Lay Reader: Alberta Birk
Communion Assistants: Helen Habecker & Misty Castillo
Council Rep. on Duty: Matt Schmidt
Bell Ringers: Mark Lehmberg & Mike Goff
Speaker System: Bob Vacek & Mark Lehmberg
Ushers: Matt Schmidt, Joe Keller, Cynthia Bauer, & Janette Tomlinson
Property Person on Duty: Jerry Bearden & Cass Castillo
Altar Guild
 Flower Chairman: Nancy Brown
 Parament Chairman: Debbie Nebgen
 Communion Chairman: Sherry Schmidt
Women’s Bible Study: Does not meet in July
Memorials: Church Office 325-347-5582

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTORY
FOR AUGUST

Lay Reader: Joe Keller
Communion Assistants: Jeff Owen & Brandi Nobles
Council Rep. on Duty: Julia Carter
Bell Ringers: Mark Lehmberg & Mike Goff
Speaker System: Bob Vacek & Mark Lehmberg
Ushers: T McIntosh, Mike Goff, Jerry Bearden, & Cass Castillo
Property Person on Duty: Mike Goff & Stephen Dehlinger
Altar Guild
 Flower Chairman: Paulette Keller
 Parament Chairman: Kassi Reichenau
 Communion Chairman: Helen Habecker
Women’s Bible Study: Does not meet in August
Memorials: Church Office 325-347-5582

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTORY
FOR SEPTEMBER

Lay Reader: Helen Habecker
Communion Assistants: Paulette Keller & Julia Carter
Council Rep. on Duty: Merlina Gamel
Bell Ringers: Mark Lehmberg & Mike Goff
Speaker System: Bob Vacek & Mark Lehmberg
Ushers: John Gillespie, Chad Schmidt, Nancy Brown, & Bert Mahnken
Property Person on Duty: Mark Lehmberg & Bob Vacek
Altar Guild
 Flower Chairman: Sherie Clarkson
 Parament Chairman: Connie Smith
 Communion Chairman: Amy Brooks
Women’s Bible Study:
Morning Bible Study (First Wed. of month at 10AM)
 Leader, Hostess & Location: TBD
Memorials: Church Office 325-347-5582

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Rev. Mark Ward	Interim Pastor
Ann Mahnken	Youth Christian Education
Ginny Barlow	Church Administrator

Church Office Hours:
Mon.-Thu. 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
(325) 347-5582 (Office)

Worship Service: 11:00 AM
Sunday School: 9:45 AM

Email: stpaulmason@gmail.com
Website: www.stpaulmason.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/elcamasontexas
 Livestream of worship service every Sunday
Mailing: PO Box 26, Mason, TX 76856
Physical: 104 S. Magnolia St., Mason, TX 76856

MONTHLY CALENDAR

The monthly calendar is available upon request by print or email. You may also view our calendar on our website or church app. Please notify the office for more information, stpaulmason@gmail.com or 347-5582.

PROCLAIMER PUBLICATION

The Proclaimer will be published 4 times each year in January, April, July and October.

CHRIST IN OUR HOME booklets for July, August, and September are available in the Narthex and at each of the exits. Please pick up your copy today!

VIEW THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE NARTHEX FOR NEWS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS!

We wish to thank those who have so graciously contributed their time and talents toward the ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

