



St. Paul Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod
Columbus, Indiana

2025 Annual Report

Dear Church Family,

It is an exciting season here at St. Paul! Sitework has begun and soon the foundation will be laid for our Christian Education Center. As the building begins to take shape, we are reminded of a more important “building”. The church is not brick and mortar, but people. In 1 Peter 2:5, we are described as “living stones” that God is building up as His spiritual house with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone.



Thus, ***Built on the Rock*** is an appropriate theme for this construction year. We seek to construct the Christian Education Center solidly so that it can serve our congregation and community for generations. But more importantly, we are called to build our faith and lives on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. We are called as a church family to be firmly founded on Christ and His Word.

The Annual Report serves as a summary of the past year. But the Annual Report is more than just numbers and statistics. The Annual Report is about God’s people—those who have been brought into the family of God through baptism, youth and adults who are firmly founded on God’s Word through confirmation instruction, and those from our church family who built their faith and lives on Christ and are now with the Lord in glory. We also rejoice in the many individuals who have joined our family of faith in 2025 as together we are being built up as Christ’s Church in this place as we make the commitment to gather together around the Word in worship and Sunday School. The Annual Report also shows how we are seeking to reach out with the saving Gospel Word so that others can be firmly founded on Christ now and for all eternity.

If you have any questions about the Annual Report, don’t hesitate to ask me, a member of our church or early childhood ministry staff, or an officer or board member. Also, if you have any ideas to strengthen our mission and ministry here and abroad, please let us know. Continue to pray for our church family that we would remain firmly founded on Christ the Solid Rock!

In Christ’s Love to Extend Christ’s Love,
Pastor Bauman



Year In Review

- Attendance at our Spanish worship services doubled in 2025.
- In March, our early childhood ministry’s accreditation was renewed through National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. The accreditation team commended our dedicated staff and the congregational support for our school. The visitation team was most impressed with the Christ-centered instruction and integration of the faith in all aspects of the school day.
- We served 160 children through Vacation Bible School, of which 121 children were from non-member families.
- We held our first-ever Spanish Vacation Bible School at Woodlawn Mobile Home Park.
- 10 youth attended the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July.
- In June, Jen Probst began serving as our Director of Christian Education, overseeing all youth, children, early childhood, and Christian education ministries.
- We are blessed to serve 65 children and their families through our early childhood ministry this school year.
- On October 5th, we voted to begin construction of our Christian Education Center. Our Groundbreaking Service was held on Reformation Sunday, October 26th.

2025 Statistics

Baptized Membership (total membership): 635
Confirmed Membership: 531

Average Sunday Morning Worship Attendance: 376
Average Sunday School Attendance: 171

Welcome New Members



Donita Barringer
Dustin Bassett
Brian Bostwick
Doug and Rhonda Brown
Beverly Campbell
Jenny Chavez
Kailey (Smith) Davidson
Kenny and Christy DeBord
Jeremy, Kirsten, Grant, and Lane Gilmore
Toni (Jaynes) Howarth, Corbin and Kenlee
Emmitt Jones
Aaron, Crystal, Elisabeth, William, and Theodore Laws
Mark and Debbie Mensendiek
Mick, Liesel, and Grace Murphy
Isaiah Nay
Greg and TAmy Price
Joseph, Amanda, and Heidi Smith
Greg and Jeanne Sperry
Rachel Wagoner
Paul and Lisa Wendel
Jerrod Wray

In 2025, we welcomed 40 baptized members
and 33 communicant members.
In 2024, we welcomed 30 baptized members
and 26 communicant members.



Baptisms

Yadir Rafael Acosta Rendon
Besy Eliette Bassett
Nancy Eleanor Alyssia Burbrink
Thomas Randall Chandler
Benjamin Jonathan Cline
Kailey Lynn (Smith) Davidson
ViviAnne Eleanor Denny
Grace Elizabeth Haywood
Madeline Eleanor Haywood
Natalie Rose Hogan
Corbin Alexandros Howarth
Kenlee Kole Howarth
Harper Sasse Hums
Reese Walker Koeberlein
Oliver Herschel Jackson
Matthew Noé López
Taylor Jane Mau
Tobi George Patterson
Lennon Leigh Potter
Heidi Marie Smith
Thomas Wayne Turi

In 2025, there were 21 baptisms compared to
9 baptisms in 2024.

Confirmations



Youth

Adam Kenneth Arnholt
Edwin Gabriel Chun-Escalante
Jaclyn Michelle Dettmer
Jonathon Stephen Dettmer
Grant William Gilmore
Tabitha Katherine Hall
Zaid Emanuel Hernández Rendon
Emmitt Taylor Jones
Ridge Arthur Koester
Jocelyn Taylor Vogel
Jesse August Wofford

Adults

Dustin Bassett
Kailey (Smith) Davidson
Toni Lee (Jaynes) Howarth
Aaron, Crystal, and Elisabeth Laws
Isaiah Nay
Joseph and Amanda Smith
Gregory and Jeanne Sperry
Jerrod Wray

In 2025, 23 confirmations: 11 youth, 12 adults
In 2024, 17 confirmations: 9 youth, 8 adults

Marriages

Brett Burbrink and Alexandra Lane
Linden Sasse and Elysia Tieman
Jacob Howarth and Toni Jaynes
Isaiah Nay and Reagin Branaman
Bryan Davidson and Kailey Smith



There were five marriages in 2025
and three marriages in 2024.

Deaths

Marianne Arnholt
Lynn Hoeltke
Kathy Hoover
Richard Kruger
Cathryn (Kay) Newton
Dennis Peters
Amy Price
Irma Ramsey
Robert Risk
Janice Sherbundy
Pastor William Stache
Earl Stam

In 2025, 12 members entered into eternal life
compared to 4 members in 2024.

BUILDING PROJECT

By January 2027, our Christian Education Center will be nearing completion. As temperatures moderate, anticipate much more activity on the building site. In addition to the Christian Education Center, parking will also be added behind the church.

We are so thankful for your generous support of Extending Christ's Love. This includes fulfilling your pledge, but also many who have chosen to increase their pledge or accelerate the fulfillment of their pledge.



Present and former school families, church and community members have contributed over \$115,000 toward our \$120,000 goal for the playground project. All gifts for this project are matched dollar-for-dollar.

In the coming weeks, we will be publishing the *Catalog of Needed Items*. This will include furnishings, appliances, landscaping, and other items needs for the Christian Education Center. Those who sponsor these items can give their donation in memory of or honor of a loved one or in thanksgiving for a special event. All gifts given will be included in the bulletin when the Christian Education Center is dedicated in 2027.

Please continue to pray for the Building and Finance Committees and for our congregation during this process and pray that Christ's love would be extended to many people, young and old, through our Christian Education Center.

WALKING TOGETHER AS SYNOD

The word "synod" means "on the road together." As a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (lcms.org), we walk together first and foremost with a common confession of faith firmly founded on the Word of God and expressed in our Lutheran Confessions. Because of our synodical fellowship, we can accomplish more working and walking together than we would as individual congregations.



- **Latino Outreach:** Through a partnership with Lutheran churches in the Indianapolis area as well as our Indiana District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Pastor Fickenscher leads Latino outreach at our congregation and at Trinity Lutheran in Indianapolis. After Sunday services at St. Paul, Pastor Fickenscher leads Spanish worship and Bible study on Sunday afternoons at Trinity. Most weeks, he spends Sunday nights in Indianapolis and makes visitations and leads confirmation classes on Mondays.
- **Mission Support for our Indiana District and Synod:** Over 6% of our Sunday offerings are directly forwarded

on to our District and Synod. At the District level, our mission offerings support new mission congregations, ethnic outreach, church work scholarships, and campus ministries. At the synodical level, our gifts support national and international missions.

- **Day School Education:** We are blessed that children of our congregation can receive a Lutheran elementary education at St. Peter's, White Creek, and Immanuel. Conversely, many of our preschool families are members of St. Peter's and White Creek as these churches do not have an early childhood ministry.
- **Trinity Lutheran High School:** We are one of 15 congregations that form the Trinity Lutheran High School Association so that our families can receive a Lutheran education through high school.
- **Concordia Counseling Center:** We have joined together with other LCMS congregations to establish and support the Concordia Counseling Center which is located at Redeemer, Seymour. Concordia Counseling offers Christ-centered counseling and does not turn anyone away because of inability to pay.
- **Camp Lakeview:** Camp Lakeview gives our children and youth a summer camp experience. We utilize our Lutheran camp for our annual Confirmation Retreat and church members attend retreats at camp.
- **LWML:** The Lutheran Women's Missionary League is a synod-wide mission organization. The first Sunday of every month we gather a Mite Box Offering to support these missions.
- **Orphan Grain Train:** OGT is a recognized service organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Indiana Warehouse is in Jonesville. Many of our members volunteer at OGT to provide material goods to those in need in our community and throughout the world.
- **Aurora Circuit:** Each of our Synod's 35 districts are divided into Circuits. Our congregation is in the Aurora Circuit. Our Circuit works together to provide a yearly Youth Lock-in. In addition, the Aurora Circuit Church Workers Scholarship Fund provides scholarships for those from our Circuit who are preparing for church work vocations.
- **Lutheran Community Home:** LCH was established by the LCMS congregations in our area in the 1960s. Our pastors, along with area pastors, lead worship services at the LCH.

One aspect of our "walking together" as a Synod is to provide support for congregations who are without a pastor. Faith Lutheran in Madison has requested that we provide pastoral care beginning in May 2026 when their current Pastor Jeff Pflug retires. During the pastoral vacancy at Faith, one of our three pastors or Pastor Erkkinen will be leading worship at Faith. Please pray for Faith, Madison and all congregations without a pastor that God would provide a faithful shepherd for them.



STEWARDSHIP

Managing God's Gifts To Us

Thanks to your generosity, we are able to further our Lord's mission locally and globally. Your gifts are a tremendous blessing!

General Fund: Offerings to the general fund (blue envelopes) support our mission endeavors including District and Synod Missions and our Mission of the Month. Your gifts and tithes also allow us to reach out into our community through our Latino outreach and early childhood ministry. Total 2025 general fund income was \$1,149,976.53 and total expenses were \$1,029,562.46, resulting in a net income of \$120,414.07.

Extending Christ's Love: At the end of 2025, we are 16 months into our 64-month Extending Christ's Love Campaign, and the response of God's people to this endeavor is phenomenal! Total income from all sources as of December 31, 2025, is \$3,141,564.97, which is 40% of the approved budget for the construction of the Christian Education Center. *To God Be the Glory!* An added blessing of your generosity is that these funds are currently earning interest until they are needed for the project. The more that is contributed early in the campaign will also postpone our need to begin financing from Lutheran Church Extension Fund, thus saving even more in interest payments.

Lutheran Scholarship Granting Organization: The Lutheran SGO program allows Indiana residents to contribute to a private school to provide tuition assistance. Those who contribute to the SGO receive a 50% credit on their Indiana income taxes. For the current school year, we received \$31,921 in donations to the SGO. As of December 31, 2025, church members and other supporters of our early childhood ministry contributed \$80,676 for the 2026-2027 school year. SGO contributions given now through May 31, 2027, will be added to this amount to be utilized for the 2026-2027 Early Childhood Ministry school year.

Legacy Gifts: Legacy gifts include endowments, trusts, and estates that provide ongoing support for mission and ministry for generations to come. Legacy gifts to our congregation make a tremendous impact, as 2025 legacy gift income was \$1,141,248. These gifts supported Extending Christ's Love, music ministry, church worker scholarships, and Helping Hands.

We are committed to transparency regarding the financial health of our congregation. If you would like detailed financial reports or want more information about the Scholarship Granting Organization, please contact Financial Secretary Rachel Fohne. Questions about the budget can be directed to Treasurer Jackie Arnholt, or a member of the Board of Stewardship.

2026 Officers, Board Members, Church and School Staff

President:

Jason Schroer

Vice-President:

Phil Burbrink

Secretary:

Linda Scheidt

Financial Secretary:

Rachel Fohne

Treasurer:

Jackie Arnholt

Elders:

Brian Arnholt

Jim Brock

Adam Hall

Art Ramsey

Eric Scheidt

Jeff Schroer

Carl Shaffer

Wiley Umphress

Steve Voelz

Youth:

Thomas Essex

Jacob Howarth

April Ann Wofford

Education:

Crista Burbrink

Chad Fohne

Sarah Lewis

Trustees:

Marcus Linke

Steve Potter

Dan Schroer

Cemetery:

Frank Helt

Neil Nolting

Daniel Wint

Evangelism:

Mike Hackman

Kacey Patterson

Colin Scheidt

Early Childhood Ministry:

Andrea Cotton

Emily Linke

Marissa Younger

Stewardship:

Rob Baltus

Adam Scheidt

Hayden Shuffett

Endowments, Estates, and Trusts:

Adam Scheidt

Warren Scheidt

Trinity High School Board:

Larry Haak

Henry Wischmeier

White Creek Lutheran School Foundation:

Matthew Lewis

Travis Price

Council-at-Large:

Katie Arnholt

April Hoeltke

Mark Wint

Youth Counselors:

KfC: Chad and Rachel

Fohne; Matthew and

Sarah Lewis

C4Life: Travis and Lisa

Price

SPY: Eric and Linda

Scheidt; Dr. Tom

Reinsel

Church & ECM Staff:

Pastors Fickenscher,
Patterson, & Bauman

DCE Jen Probst

Kantor Daniel Mau

Church Secretary

Mackenzie Wint

Financial Secretary

Rachel Fohne

Social Media

Andrea Cotton

Latino Outreach

Renee Strietelmeier

Sunday School

Superintendent Katie

Arnholt

Teachers Anne Wiltsey,

Alyssa Schultz,

Michelle Schultz,

Glory Wofford

Teacher Assistants: Gayla

Alesandro, Sarah Lewis,

Laurie Schultz,

Claudia Sims, Caroline

Wilcox, Amy Yeley