



Summertime is upon us, and I don't feel like writing an article. I am at the point in my work/rest cycle where I am looking forward to the rest (article written on or about June 13, 2025). And, the truth be known, I have never enjoyed writing. Of all the things that fall under the category of difficult work, writing would be at the top for me. Yes, I write a sermon every week, but writing to speak is different than writing for someone to read.

Okay, I'll get off the pitty-pot and get to it. For my summer respite this year, I am taking a completely different approach than I normally do. My preferred way to get away is to find some place I want to go, rent a house or room in the area, and then go. I travel there, unpack, plop myself down, and let the rest begin. I sleep in, do as little as possible, play as much golf as I can, and take naps daily. After a week or two, I pack up and go home. I find having a week or two to do absolutely nothing in a location away from home incredibly relaxing.

This year I'm going to be a "road warrior." I am taking a road trip out to Denver, Colorado, with four stops along the way. Beginning on Sunday, June 29, my first stop is the Chautauqua Institute outside of Jamestown, NY, for a week of lectures, concerts, and relaxing. From there I will go to see several friends and family across the country...following the Benjamin Franklin "fish rule" ...I'm staying less than 3 days at each place.

Last year I began thinking about people who are priorities in my life. Do I let them know how much their friendship, love, support, and kindness has meant or means to me? Do I put in the time to maintain the relationship, and do I make the effort to be with them? As a single man, I recognize that I have some advantages. I have a lot of freedom. As a result, I decided to go see my loved ones.

One of my important people is rather unique. Some of you know that I have been in a meaningful mentor/mentee, pastor/parishioner, father/son, relationship with a man who has been incarcerated for 19 years, almost to the day. I met him when I was a campus minister, and he was a student at Montana State who had been arrested. At the time of our first meeting, he was in jail for murder. Subsequently he accepted a plea agreement and is now serving a 135-year sentence. He will be eligible for parole in 2037 after serving over 30 years. His name is Branden Miller.

During the first two years of his incarceration he was in the county jail in Bozeman, I visited him every two weeks. After his conviction, he was placed in the Department of Corrections which separated us by several hundred miles, making my visits less frequent. When I moved to New Jersey, our visits were reduced to periodic "face-time visits" through the prison phone system. I have not seen him face to face for 14 years.

From his prison, he can call me on the phone, but I can never call him. For as long as he has been incarcerated, he has called me about every two weeks. We talk for up to an hour. After almost 20 years, we've become very close, and his relationship is important to me. In the past, though, there was always a reason for me to not go and see him. It is too easy to not do something. Last summer I said, "enough! I'm going to go see Branden." For the past year, I have been working on my 2025 itinerary, and I will see Branden face to face in the prison where he is incarcerated on July 11 and 12.

Along with seeing Branden, I will stop and see two of my brothers, one in Michigan and the other in Indiana, and two very good friends (men who are like brothers) with one in Kansas City, MO, and the other in Denver, CO.

Regardless of whether you travel or not, I pray you all have a good summer. Get out and do something in the warm winds. If you travel, I pray traveling mercies for you. If you have visitors to your home, I pray for your patience and that you know it is a gift to others when you share a warm welcome to those you receive.

See you in worship...or on the road.

Rev. Joel

Confirmation Class of 2025!

Hopefully you were in worship on June 8 to experience Confirmation Sunday. I was pleased with the service at both churches. Each congregation confirmed three youth. Aside from being confirmed, the youth read liturgy and scriptures and served communion. At St. Peter's, the three boys formed a musical ensemble and performed for the prelude. I was proud of each youth as they all did such a tremendous job. Special thank you to Ashley Eckof from St. Peter's who made the stoles we placed on the youths' shoulders. She donated the materials and the time to make them. On top of that, she assisted me with the youth every time we met either in the classroom or at a mission event. Aside from her, there were many others to thank. There were people who purchased cake and supplies, others who prepared the elements for communion, and at least one who made bulletin inserts with information on the confirmands. It was truly a very wonderful team effort. Thank you all.

At St. Peter's we confirmed Jonas Edelman, Landon Fulmer, and Noah Fulmer. At St. Paul's we confirmed Landon Bauer, Kirsten Gabovitz, and Talin Reichard.



Below is a picture of Ron Lobach and Rev. Joel on the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend. Ron proudly wears his Air Force uniform, and it is impressive that he can still fit into it! We missed him for several months while he was rehabilitating after his recent knee surgery. It is wonderful to have him back in worship.



Take Advantage of QCD – A Benefit for Donors over 70 ½ -years-old

If you give to the church, are over the age of 70 ½, and have a traditional, rollover, or inherited IRA (individual retirement account), you can benefit from a Qualified Charitable Distribution, or QCD. Essentially, you can send money directly from your IRA to the church, and you can reduce the amount of your taxable income by the amount of the donation. There is a limit on the gift size of \$108,000 per individual or \$216,000 per married couple, so please be aware of that (haha!) Regardless of the size of your donation, any gift will reduce the amount of taxes you pay. If you do meet the above requirements, I would strongly encourage you take advantage of this policy and ask your accountant or financial planner to set up such a transaction.

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Mark your calendars for the third annual combined church picnic to be held on Sunday, August 3 at 10 am at the Northampton Municipal Park. Join us and our sister church, St. Peter's for a wonderful day of worship, good food, and fun! We encourage you to bring a lawn chair and a covered dish to share. The park has many amenities so bring the kids, grandkids, and a friend or two.

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MISSION 2026

North Street Mission * Wooster, Ohio
Sunday, June 21 – Saturday, June 27

We had such a meaningful time we're going to go again – and we hope you'll join us!

Volunteer Projects: We will begin each morning by serving breakfast to the homeless at our host location. Each day following breakfast, we will work with one of several community organizations such as People to People Ministries (local food pantry), Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, Community Gardens, Every Women's House (domestic violence shelter), Friendship Meals, and the Wilderness Center.

Educational Activities: We will become more aware of the challenges to the community faces through a variety of educational programs. Wooster is located in the heart of Ohio's Amish and Mennonite communities which we may explore while we are here.

If you might be interested in attending and would like to receive updated information as it is received, please sign up at the Mission Table or contact Mindy Does at mindy.does@yahoo.com

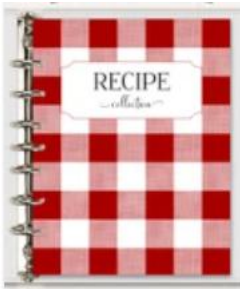
Jack Frost Parade Float



Summer may have just started but the Mission Team is already looking forward to our busy Fall schedule. Last year we entered a St. Paul's float into Northampton's Jack Frost Parade. We want to gauge the interest in having a float again this year. If you are interested in being part of a team to design and build a float and/or walk along the night of the parade, please sign up on the sheet on the Mission Table, indicate your interest on the church website, or contact Mindy Does.

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## Church Family Cookbook



The Mission Team is creating a Church Cookbook as both a means to make connections through sharing beloved recipes and as a fundraiser for upcoming mission projects.

The first printing of cookbooks is expected to be available mid-summer. Quantities are limited and will be offered for sale first to those who have placed a reservation.

You can reserve your copy/copies of the cookbook from the initial run through the church website ([www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org](http://www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org)), by signing up on the sheet on the Mission Table in the church Narthex, or by emailing [mindy.does@yahoo.com](mailto:mindy.does@yahoo.com).

The cost of each cookbook is \$20.00 which is not due until you receive your cookbook. All proceeds benefit the St. Paul's Mission Fund.

**Thank you** to everyone who has shared recipes for the cookbook!! We couldn't do this without you!

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Scout Spaghetti Supper

Scout Troop #93 will host an all-you-can-eat Spaghetti Supper on Saturday, July 26 from 4-7 pm in the church fellowship hall. The menu includes spaghetti, salad, drinks and dessert (ice cream). Proceeds from the dinner support the troop's activities. Come hungry and support the Scouts!



St. Paul's Financial Report January – May 2025

Jan. – Mar. Inc. \$51,690.41
Jan. – Mar. Exp. \$(66,614.26)
Jan. – Mar. expenses
exceed our income by: **(14,923.85)**

A reserve fund transfer of \$10,000 was
used to cover the Jan. – Mar. expenses.

April Income: \$18,392.85
April expenses: \$(22,863.70)
April expenses exceed
our income by: **\$(4,470.85)**

May Income: \$16,100.61
May Expenses: \$(20,811.63)
May expenses exceed
Our income by: **\$(4,711.02)**

A reserve fund transfer of \$2,000 was
used to cover the May expenses.

Jan. – Mar. E-give Offerings: \$1,879.44
April E-Give Offerings: \$664.10
May E-Give Offerings: \$462.17



Thank you for your continued generosity and support of St. Paul's!

GIANT GIFT CARDS



If you shop at Giant, please consider participating in a great fundraising opportunity for St. Paul's through Giant's "Cash for Causes" program. **St. Paul's earns 5% of the face value of all the gift cards sold.** Gift cards are available in denominations of \$25, \$50 and \$100 and can be used like cash at any Giant location. If interested in purchasing gift cards, please contact Cindy Swankoski at 484-560-6542. Thank you for your participation.

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Give Hope!

Our local families in need benefit greatly from your donations to the Northampton Food Bank. **Current Items needed: canned soups, canned potatoes, Jello, pudding, dried potatoes, mixed vegetables, baked beans, canned meats and beef stew.** Non-perishable food items and monetary donations can be dropped off at church or the church office. Thank you for caring and sharing!

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Redner's Save-A-Tape Program



Shop at Redner's? St. Paul's receives 1% of the total receipts submitted. Whole receipts (cut off receipts are not accepted) can be dropped off in the Redner's receipt bag in the narthex or dropped off at the church office. Thank you for saving those tapes!

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Have fun while serving others at the next Iron Pigs game on Saturday, July 19. Help earn big bucks for St. Paul's by volunteering in the concession stand. This is the last date to volunteer for the season. If you're interested, please sign up in the narthex.

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St. Paul's Prayer Partners help to provide hope, spiritual support and help to bring a deep sense of comfort to someone going through a difficult time. If you would like to become a prayer partner, or have prayer requests/updates, please contact Sally Jane by email @ sallyjane1717@yahoo.com

LET US REMEMBER IN PRAYER: Alison Delabar, Cathy Bogar, John Stolz, Marge Oberly, Ronald Lobach, Richard Bogar, Joan Panik, Lenny Panik, Larry Saylor, Keith Beil, Lynnel Groller, Peggy Kohler, Consistory, churches, nation and leaders, U.S. Military, many refugees, and persecuted Christians.



Fire transforming us for the good



For many people, relaxing by a campfire is a favorite summer activity. Nestling into the surrounding darkness while gazing into dancing flames, we sense God's love and let the day's chaos go. In contrast, Exodus 24:17 describes, "Now the appearance of the glory of God was like a devouring fire."

Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes offers another take, writing about God using flames to change us. (The full poem is here: unfoldinglight.net/2025/02/24/fire)

God, your presence is like a consuming fire —
not destructive, but transformative,
not the fire of anger but the flame of love,
the fire of glassblowers and bakers
the grace to make us more beautiful, strong and useful.
Your glory is no tame campfire
where we sit and make s'mores.
It burns out of our control.
The furnace of your love
roars about our hearts, remaking us
Teach us to be unafraid. ...



When you bask in firelight glow — and maybe eat some s'mores! — ponder how God is transforming you with love, and for the sake of love.

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## Tips for gardeners

"Love is to the heart what the summer is to the farmer's year," said evangelist Billy Graham. "It brings to harvest all the loveliest flowers of the soul." Without summer, our gardens would disappoint, and without love, our hearts wouldn't bloom.

The warmth of summer and love aren't the only ingredients required for abundant physical and spiritual crops, however. Discernment and persistence ensure fruitful yields in both areas. "Unless we know the difference between flowers and weeds, we are not fit to take care of a garden," advised Clyde Francis Lytle. "It is not enough to have truth planted in our minds. We must learn and labor to keep the ground clear of thorns and briars, follies and perversities, which have a wicked propensity to choke the word of life."





**July:**

07/06 – Open  
 07/13 – Cathy Conley  
 07/20 – Open  
 07/27 – Open

**August:**

08/03 – Jane Hoh  
 08/10 – Karen Zemlansky  
 08/17 – Karen Sands  
                   Julie Beck  
 08/24 – Open  
 08/31 – John Kromer



**Bulletins**

**July:**

07/06 – Open  
 07/13 – Phyllis Bartholomew  
 07/20 – Mike McGuiness  
 07/27 – Open

**August:**

08/03 – Kathy Kaitz/Julie Beck  
 08/10 – Open  
 08/17 – Open  
 08/24 – Brian Saylor  
 08/31 – John Kromer

The cost to sponsor the Altar flowers is \$30.00 and the Bulletins is \$10.00. Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office @ 610-261-2910 if you would like to sponsor.

Note: There are **two** spaces available to sign up on the altar flower chart in the narthex. You are encouraged to sign up for any date even if someone else already has.

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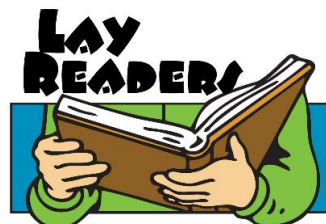


July:

07/06 – Karen Sands
 07/13 – John Kromer
 07/20 – Donald Biggs
 07/27 – Lori Balliet
 8/31 – John Kromer

August:

8/03 – Picnic (TBA)
 8/10 – Karen Sands
 8/17 – Donald Biggs
 8/24 – Brian Saylor



July:

07/06 – Karen Klein
 07/13 – Glenn Spiece
 07/20 – Larry Oberly
 07/27 – Lori Balliet



7/11 – Mr. & Mrs. Richard Bartholomew
7/26 – Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gabovitz



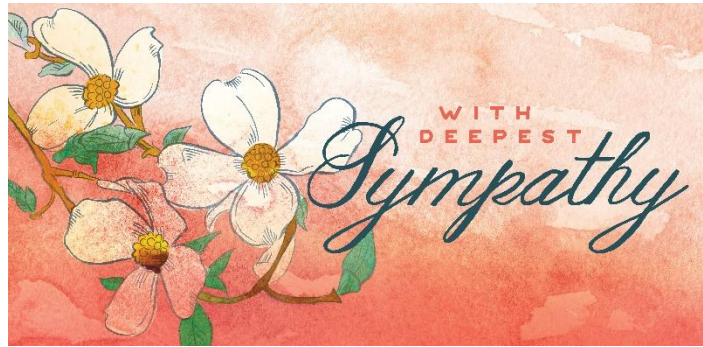
7/06 – Kenneth Kohler
7/08 – Krystin Proctor
7/12 – Cathy Conley
7/13 – Daniel Knecht
7/17 – Richard Bartholomew
7/19 – Joyce Leonard
7/26 – Ryan Biggs
7/28 – Michael Gable
7/30 – Joyce Haines



8/02 – Rudolph & Karen Klein
8/04 – Zoltan & Tina Bedocs
Dennis & Linda Kressley
8/09 – John & Sandra Kokinda
8/17 – Maurice & Evelyn McNeely
8/18 – David & Penny Farkas
8/21 – Dennis & Marianne Michael
8/22 – James & Debra Gable
8/29 – Craig & Connie Markulics



8/02 – Lori Balliet
8/03 – Matthew Hoh
8/04 – Kimberly Snyder
8/05 – Donna Biggs
8/06 – Karen Zemlansky
8/07 – Amelia Zeiner
8/09 – Heidi Edwards
8/12 – Donna Mohr
8/14 – Larson Schultz
8/17 – Edward Hawk, Jr
8/20 – Connie Markulics
8/22 – Sam Bubick
8/23 – Kelsey Williams
8/26 – Kelly Swinger
8/29 – Kathryn Kaintz
Christine Kromer



We bid farewell to Larry R. Saylor of Northampton, Pennsylvania, whose journey of life gracefully concluded on June 15, 2025 at the age of 79. Larry touched countless lives with warmth and kindness, leaving behind cherished memories that will forever echo in hearts.

In the hush of twilight, as the stars twinkle in silent homage, we reflect on the legacy Larry leaves behind and his impact on the lives of his loved ones. Though Larry may no longer walk among us, his spirit lives on in the memories held dear by his family and friends, a guiding light that illuminates their paths in times of darkness.

He was predeceased by: his parents, Ray Saylor and Lillian Saylor (Marsh); his wife Joan R. Saylor (Hantz); and his sister Brenda Semmel. He is survived by: his sons, Brian L. Saylor of Northampton, PA. and Michael Saylor of Northampton, PA.; his granddaughter Kaila of Phillipsburg, NJ; and his great grandchild Nevaeh of Phillipsburg, NJ..

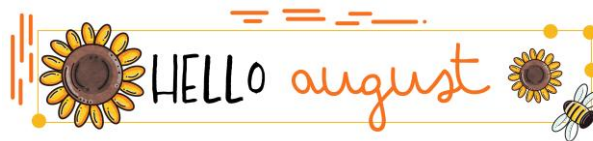
Contributions: May be made in his memory to St. Paul's U.C.C. Church Memorial Fund, 105 E. 19th Street, Northampton, PA 18067.



Spend time with God this summer



- July 04** – Independence Day!
July 06 – 10:30 – Worship w/Communion
July 07 – 7:00 – AA (parlor)
July 09 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
July 13 – 10:30 – Worship w/Guest Minister, Darlene
Blocker
July 14 – 7:00 – AA (parlor)
July 16 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
July 19 – Volunteers @ Iron Pigs Game
July 20 – 10:30 – Worship
July 21 – 7:00 – AA (Parlor)
July 23 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
July 26 – (4-7pm) Scout Spaghetti Supper (FH)
July 27 – 10:30 – Worship
July 28 – 7:00 – AA (Parlor)
July 30 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)



- Aug. 03** – 10:00 – Combined Picnic @ Northampton
Community Park
Aug. 04 – 7:00 – AA (parlor)
Aug. 06 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
Aug. 10 – 10:30 – Worship/Deadline for September
Newsletter Articles
Aug. 10 – 7:00 – AA (parlor)
Aug. 13 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
Aug. 17 – 10:30 – Worship
Aug. 18 – 7:00 – AA (parlor)
Aug. 19 – 6:30 – Consistory (annex)
Aug. 20 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
Aug. 24 – 10:30 – Worship
Aug. 25 – 7:00 – AA (Parlor)
Aug. 27 – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)
Aug. 31 – 10:30 – Worship



Pastor – Rev. Joel Biggers
Organist – Edward Novogratz
Director of Christian Ed. – Melinda Does
Office Administrator – Christine Hostetter
Custodian – Shea Killeen
Church Office Phone – 610-261-2910
E-mail – stpaulsnorth@gmail.com
Website – www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org

Pastor's Office Hours: Thursday & Friday from 9:00-5:00 PM. Pastor Joel can be reached by email joelwbiggers@gmail.com or by calling 732-853-4809.

Church Office Hours: Mon., (8-12) Tues., Wed., Thurs. (8-3)

Summer Worship, Summer Joy

Even in the relaxed pace of summer, God is at work! Our Sunday services continue to be a source of joy and encouragement—join us each week for inspiring worship and meaningful community.

