

The Visitor

Rev. Karl J. Koeppen,
Senior Pastor

Rev. Roger A. Drinnon,
Associate Pastor

Mr. Richard C. Nordmeyer,
Interim Principal

Rev. David Baker,
Missionary to Mongolia

Mary Weber, LCPC,
Family Counselor

December
2022/
January
2023



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

#changinglives

Please also see us online!

Worship & Bible Study Opportunities

Traditional Worship:

Saturday 5:00 pm @ the Downtown Church
located at 348 E. Merchant St., Kankakee, IL

Sunday 8:30 am @ the School
located 1780 Career Center Road, Bourbonnais, IL

Contemporary Worship:

Sunday 11:05 am @ the School

Adult & Youth Bible Class:

Sunday 9:50 am @ the School
Classes for Adults & 6th - 12th grade

Children's Sunday School:

Sunday 9:50 am @ the School
Classes for Pre-K through 5th grade

Church & School Office: 815-932-0312

Office Hours:

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Church Website: www.stpaulslutheran.net

Next Newsletter Deadline January 15th



MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP

Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th, 14th & 21st at 7:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

Saturday, December 24th
5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m. -
Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

Sunday, December 25th
10:00 a.m. - Communion

NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE

Saturday, December 31st
6:00 p.m. - Communion

NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

Sunday, January 1st
10:00 a.m. - Communion

~~~~~

\* Because the Christmas and New Year's holidays fall over a weekend, all of the Saturday and Sunday services will be held at the downtown church.

\* There will only be one service on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Please pay special attention to the time.

\* The Saturday service on New Year's Eve will be one hour later than normal.

### SPECIAL DATES

- \* Christmas Break, December 19 - January 2
- \* First Day of Winter, December 21
- \* Christmas Eve, December 24
- \* Christmas Day, December 25
- \* New Year's Day, January 1
- \* Epiphany, January 6
- \* Baptism of the Lord, January 8
- \* Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 16
- \* National Lutheran Schools Week, Jan 22-28



### ADVENT DEVOTIONS

Join us as we spend time in God's Word, using the Lutheran Hour Ministries' devotion, "A Son Is Given". You can pick up a paper copy at church or school or you can sign up for daily advent emails at [www.lhm.org/advent/](http://www.lhm.org/advent/).

In "A Son Is Given", we look at the promise of God to send His Messiah as fulfilled in Jesus. The Heavenly Father made good on His ancient pledge. In Jesus we have the love of God come to earth in the form of a Child, who is for us the Savior of the world.

**“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest  
and let Thy gifts to us be blessed. Amen.”**

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

The words above are familiar words, aren't they? They don't change too much (except for the “*These*” and “*Thy*” variations. AND there is the occasional “*Eugene Wachholz addition*” which continues “*And may there be a goodly share on every table, everywhere.*”



Throughout this year, I have heard (and prayed) those words in a variety of places:

- † At home, here in Kankakee,
- † At lunch or dinner with friends,
- † At various Wedding celebrations over the summer.
- † We'll pray this when we visit with Lynda's father in St. Louis over New Years,
- † At Birthday celebrations,
- † At Anniversary celebrations,
- † At various family gatherings.

***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let Thy gifts to us be blessed. Amen.”***

It is good to ask Jesus to come and be with us and bless us with His gifts. Not just for meals, but for every minute of every day.

***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest . . . .”***

- † At personal times, . . . . . ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.”***
- † At times of great joy and celebration, . . ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.”***
- † At times when I personally struggle, . . . ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.”***
- † When we are weary from traveling, . . . . ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.”***
- † At times of family gathering, . . . . . ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.”***
- † At times of family grieving, . . . . . ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.”***

This month, we prepare for Jesus to come and be our guest yet once again as we anticipate the celebration of His birth. The season of Advent is a time for us to prepare for His coming. Yet we celebrate His coming each and every day - it is a constant reminder as we pray: ***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest . . . .”***

**And God fulfils that in IMMANUEL - God With Us.**

It is our prayer, here at St. Paul's, that you be our guest in all our Advent Midweek services and special services for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve (all the information is in the newsletter). We pray that in your own lives, you pray that our Lord and Savior, Jesus be your guest - to be present in your lives; to bring His gifts to you; and to bless you with those gifts.

The greatest gift is ours as we celebrate His birth on Christmas Eve.

***“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let Thy gifts to us be blessed. Amen.”***

Blessings in Jesus!  
Pastor Koeppen

**A HYMN FOR THE NEW YEAR**

As we enter a new year, may this hymn be a blessing for you.  
Take comfort in knowing that Jesus is with you always.

**LSB878 - Abide with Me**

- 1 Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
- 2 I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;  
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?  
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.



- 3 Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,  
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;  
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea.  
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.
- 4 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.
- 5 I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;  
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!
- 6 Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;  
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.  
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

*LSB878 - Abide with Me: Text and Music: Public domain*

Blessings in Jesus!  
Pastor Koeppen

## Redeeming Christmas from Pagan Lies

It is that time of the year. You will see articles on newsstands/the History Channel declaring the “true origins” of Christmas. Often, the accusation is that Christians “stole” the winter solstice holiday from the Roman pagan religion – specifically that of Sol Invictus – the imperial cult of the “Unconquered Sun.” The story is that when Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, Christians synchronized their religion to the pagan Roman religion. The consequence of this argument is that Christians should not celebrate Christmas. This assertion is a complete falsehood. Reviewing the evidence from church history, we can see how Christians arrived at the date of December 25<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord.



1) **The historical evidence:** Two early documents from Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus of Rome, writing around the year 200 AD, place the date of Christ’s birth at December 25<sup>th</sup>. Their testimony precedes the founding of the religion of Sol Invictus by at least 75 years. The cult of Sol Invictus was founded in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century by Aurelian as the religious solution to the Crisis of the Third Century – a complete breakdown of the Roman state during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Christians were celebrating Christmas on the date of December 25<sup>th</sup> far before that date gained any significance (if it even had any) within the Roman imperial cult.

2) **How did Christians determine the date of Christmas?** According to ancient tradition, a prophet died on the day of his conception. The date of Jesus’ death (the first Good Friday) is calculated to be on March 25<sup>th</sup> – the same day as the Festival of the Annunciation. Evidence shows that the Festival of the Annunciation was celebrated before Christmas became a standard



holiday on the liturgical calendar. The date of Christmas would be calculated based on the date of his conception. Nine months after March 25<sup>th</sup> is December 25<sup>th</sup>. Thus, Christians placed the date of the Nativity to December 25<sup>th</sup>.

3) **Christmas did not occupy as large of place in the liturgical calendar in the past as it does now.** It may come as a surprise, but Christmas's popularity in the liturgical calendar only happened relatively recently (as far as the church considers). Christmas in its modern form is mostly a product of the theology of Dr. Martin Luther! Before Luther and especially in the early church, Epiphany was the big church festival that celebrated Christ coming into the world. Epiphany's popularity in the early church was due to its emphasis on Gentile mission. But as Western Europe became almost completely Christian by 1000 AD, the mission emphasis of Epiphany became less relevant. Christmas with its emphasis on the incarnation became more relevant because of the need of theological instruction, and thus, Christmas increased in popularity.

These three reasons are only a small sample of evidence that goes against the idea that Christians simply adopted a pagan holiday into the liturgical calendar. All evidence points against Christmas being an adopted pagan holiday. Instead, Christians had a fully developed liturgical calendar at least by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, if not earlier – and evidence sides with the church year being developed way earlier than the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. To put things in perspective, Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus of Rome's relation to the apostles would be roughly our relationship between us and the founders of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The church fathers were keenly aware of syncretism (the blending of Christianity and pagan religion) and always condemned any syncretism between Christians and pagans. Often times, instead of Christianity copying Roman religion, the older traditional religions of Rome would try to emulate Christianity to gain success and popularity – and in the end they failed. Christianity triumphed over Rome.

So, can you celebrate Christmas as a Christian? Absolutely! And say, even if all the above was true, even if Christmas was just an adopted pagan holiday, who created December 25<sup>th</sup>? Sol Invictus or the God of Israel? The answer is the God of Israel, but we don't even need to go there. All the evidence is on our side that Christians have always celebrated Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup>. As Christians, we must always test the spirits (1 John 4:1). We must be aware to not be deluded by plausible arguments so that our faith would be shipwrecked (Colossians 2:4, 1 Timothy 1:19). Through these arguments, Satan wants to take away the joys of the Christmas season by placing doubt in your heart. He does not want you to go to church. He

does not want you to celebrate the reason for the season. We must remember the source of the joy of Christmas is found in Jesus. Jesus who came into the world as an infant to bring peace to the world. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14)

This holiday season, you will not find peace in the consumerism of secular Christmas – the "Christmas" promoted in the periodicals in the newsstands. Instead, come to church, be a part of the church community as we celebrate our Lord's coming into the world this Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons. Let us all have fun singing all the joyous Christmas hymns with friends and family. Put up your Christmas tree (and as Lutherans we should be especially proud that Martin Luther invented it). Proclaim Christ this season in all that you do. Jesus came to be the light of the world for us (John 8:12). He came so that He may die for us and our sins. He came to rise triumphant over the grave. May Christ and his warm light of forgiveness and life strengthen you this holiday season. Never forget Jesus is the reason for the season.

In Christ,  
Pastor Roger A. Drinnon



## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



The **SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** will be **December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm** at our downtown church. We are blessed to have so many children who are excited to share the Gospel and rejoice in Jesus' birth! You are invited to share in this celebration of the true meaning of Christmas.

### ATTENTION PARENTS! CHRISTMAS PROGRAM PRACTICE



Children from Pre-3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to participate in the Christmas program. We will spend some time each week during the Sunday School hour preparing for the program so Sunday School attendance in November and December is especially important as we get ready to share the Christmas message. In addition, on **December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>**, we will meet at the downtown church for practice **from 9 am to 11 am.** December 3<sup>rd</sup> will be for 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders only. December 10<sup>th</sup> will be for all children participating in the program.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

On **Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**, we will have a birthday party for Jesus. There will be no Sunday School on December 25<sup>th</sup> or January 1<sup>st</sup>. Regular classes will resume on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

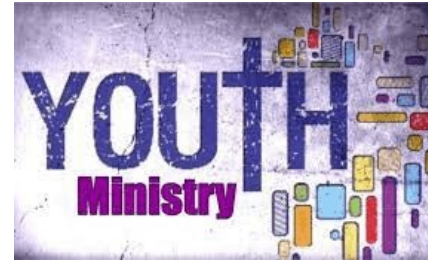
## MANGER MAKERS

Each year, St. Paul's Sunday School students are given pieces to make a nativity set. The first year they receive the Holy Family and then each year after that, they receive other nativity characters or animals to expand their set. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students receive a stable to complete their set. The manger pieces can be picked up Sunday mornings in December in the upper grade hallway.



### CHRISTMAS CAROLING

On **December 18<sup>th</sup>**, the Youth Board is hosting a potluck lunch after the late service (approx 12:30 pm). After lunch we will break into groups of adults and youth to go Christmas caroling around our county to visit our shut-ins. Everyone in the congregation is invited to participate.



### YOUTH NIGHTS

There will be no Youth Nights in December. Our next youth night will be **Sun, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> and then again on Sun., Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm** at St. Paul's School campus.

### CALLING ALL BAKERS!



The Youth Ministry is looking for people who love to bake who are willing to donate cookies to our Christmas Cookie Sale. We are looking for people to donate 9-10 dozen of their favorite Christmas cookie but any size donation is welcome. Cookies can be dropped off to the church office on December 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>. **If you would like to make cookies to donate, please sign up with Sarah Cherry by December 4<sup>th</sup>.** Sarah can be reached at 815-651-6864 or you may sign up at the cookie ordering table between services on Sundays starting Nov 20<sup>th</sup>.

## BOARD GAME NIGHT

Do you like to play board games? Do you like to play games but can't find anyone to play with you? Do you expect to need a break from



Christmas break? If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions then the Youth Board invites you to Board Game Night on **Friday, Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> from 4 pm to 8 pm** at the Bourbonnais campus. We hope to see the youth and anyone who loves playing board games at this evening of food and game playing. We will have a potluck supper and an evening filled with games of all types - classic cards, children's board games, strategy games, cooperative games, bluffing games, creative thinking games & more. We will have many to choose from but feel free to bring your favorite game too. Come take a break from Christmas break with us!

### TRIVIA NIGHT

Trivia Night is coming back on **Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Mark your calendars - you don't want to miss it! It is a great night of fun, laughs, and trivia. You don't have to know much trivia to be part of a team - good teams are filled with people of varied backgrounds and knowledge bases. Start building a team today and get ready for some trivia - some questions even created by the youth of the church. More details to come but please mark your calendars now.





### ATTENTION 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> GRADE BAND STUDENTS!

We are coordinating a youth worship band for the **8:30 am worship service on December 18<sup>th</sup>**. There will be a rehearsal on Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am at the school. For more information and to indicate your interest, please email Bill Dyche at [bill.dyche66@gmail.com](mailto:bill.dyche66@gmail.com) or text him at 815-592-0870. Please include your name, grade, and instrument in your message.

### JR. CONFIRMATION CLASSES



Please note that there has been a change to the schedule for January. There will not be a class on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Instead, all confirmation students that do not attend our school will meet on January 10<sup>th</sup>, January 17<sup>th</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>.



### ADULT BIBLE STUDY & FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

#### “THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST”

*Sundays at 9:50 am, Room 131*

*Teacher: Pastor Drinnon*

What is the most important thing in your life? Career, family, friends? While each of these are good gifts of God in our life, there is one person who reigns supreme in our lives as Christians. In the Letter to the Hebrews, the Inspired Author eloquently proclaims Jesus as the supreme fulfillment of the Old Testament. This same Jesus now reigns as the supreme Son of God over the entire world. Please join us as we journey through the Letter to the Hebrews and explore how Christ is supreme over all things in our lives.

#### MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST

We meet again **Sat, Dec 17<sup>th</sup> & Sat, Jan 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am** in the Riverside Hospital Cafeteria. Join us as we study God's Word.



### "WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT"

If you are in your 60's or older you probably learned that the third person of the Triune God was the Holy Ghost. If you have not reached your 60's yet, it is more likely that you were introduced to the Holy Spirit. It does not matter what we call Him, but it is more important that we know what he does for us. What is His job description?

There are hundreds of books that talk about the Holy Spirit. Everyone has an opinion about what He does for us. However, there are several opinions that are wrong. Our Bible class will be using the best book to give us that information - The Bible! We will be studying 7 Bible passages from the Old Testament and 100 from the New Testament and focusing on the works of the Holy Spirit. Each lesson is independent so if you can only attend sporadically because of your schedule you will still learn something about the Holy Spirit each time you attend. The class meets in Fellowship Hall (alley entrance) **every Tuesday from 10 am - 11 am**. Questions may be directed to Roy Cordes (815-304-5002).

#### “FIRST THINGS FIRST”

This prayer ministry, led by Pastor Dave Bottorff, meets on the **first Tuesday of each month from 6-7pm**. at St. Paul's Lutheran School in the cafeteria. **We will pray together again on Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> & January 3<sup>rd</sup>.**



### TABLES OF EIGHT

Do you like to eat? Do you like to meet new people and laugh? Then you need to check out Tables of Eight 2023! It's a great way to meet new people from church and develop new friendships!

Here's how it works. We meet once a month, January through April, in groups of eight at members' homes to share a meal and enjoy an evening of games, conversation, or whatever the host couple plans. Those that sign up will be put into groups of eight that change each month. Any adult, couples or singles (if you are single, please try to find a friend to join you), may sign up and will receive the details and schedules in early January. We ask that you be willing to host eight people in your home one month (the host provides the main course and beverages) and help bring part of the dinner the other three months (salad and bread; vegetable; and dessert). By the end of the four months, you will have brought each portion of the meal. If you can't attend every month, you may sign up as an alternate. These evenings are social gatherings, purely for fun. The dinners may be as formal or as casual as each host couple decides. The one guarantee is that good food and laughter abound! **The dates for this year's dinners are January 21<sup>st</sup>, February 18<sup>th</sup>, March 18<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup> (all Saturdays).** Watch the bulletin for dates to sign up after Thanksgiving! If you have any questions or are not able to sign up at church, contact Lynda Koeppe at [lykoeppen@comcast.net](mailto:lykoeppen@comcast.net) or 592-5701 by December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### ADVENT DINNERS

Our midweek Advent services begin on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> this year and we will again be having Advent dinners prior to the services. They will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall at the downtown church, where the services will also be held. The following is a schedule of the meals being served:

- \* **November 30<sup>th</sup>** - Parish Fellowship will be serving lasagna, garlic bread, and salad
- \* **December 7<sup>th</sup>** - Human Care will be serving BBQ sandwiches, applesauce, veggies, cole slaw, and chips
- \* **December 14<sup>th</sup>** - Stewardship will be serving top-your-own baked potatoes
- \* **December 21<sup>st</sup>** - TBA

All meals will include dessert, coffee and lemonade. A freewill offering will be taken to either help defray the cost of the meal or to be used by the board for one of their programs. It's a great opportunity for fellowship, so please join us for dinner before going to worship at 7:00 pm.



### FELLOWSHIP DINNERS

We are all part of the family here at St. Paul's, but in this day and age, we often don't know much about each other. One way to overcome this is to join in the Fellowship Dinners that take place about once a month. We visit a different restaurant each month and share a great couple of hours eating and getting to know each other better. No special commitment--you come when you are able. Anyone who has come at least once will tell you how much fun we have. We will meet next on **January 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm** at El Mexicano on the south side of Kankakee. On **February 10<sup>th</sup>**, we will gather at Monical's in Bourbonnais. There is no Fellowship Dinner in December. If you would like to join us and have not come before, call Nancy Eden, 248-842-2837, just as a heads up. We look forward to seeing you as we begin 2023 together! May God bless your Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations!!



### ANNUAL SPRING AUCTION & PORK CHOP DINNER

The PTL's annual Spring Auction and Pork Chop Dinner will be on **Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>**. The auction committee is well underway working on this event! The silent auction will begin online March 3<sup>rd</sup> and end March 11<sup>th</sup> during the live dinner. If you work for or own a business that would be willing to donate a basket, service, or sponsorship, please let the school office know and we will provide you with the proper paperwork for tax benefits! If you have a talent to share, we would also love to get some great handmade products or experiences for the auction! All donors will be advertised on our auction website, as well as in our Thank You Video, which will run on our school website and Facebook page, and during the live dinner. Our goal is to raise \$30,000. All proceeds from the event will be used to provide teaching supplies for our teachers and to start replacing the outdated smartboards in the classrooms. All donations are due by February 6<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your support!

### BRADLEY CHRISTMAS PARADE

On **Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**, the Village of Bradley will present their annual lighted Christmas parade beginning at 6:30 pm. This year's theme is "Candy Land Christmas" and St. Paul's PTL is doing a float for the first time. There will be a limited number of seats on the float but if you would like to walk alongside the float as a witness for our ministry, please contact the church office at 815-932-0312 for details. The more walkers we have, the bigger impact we'll make!



### CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

For the first time since 2019, the students at St. Paul's will be hosting a Christmas concert! Due to increased enrollment, there will be three separate concerts this year. **The preschoolers will sing their little hearts out on Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Then on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> graders will sing at 6:30 pm and the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders will sing at 7:30 pm.** Praise God that we are able to celebrate this joyous season together again!



**ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**  
January 3<sup>rd</sup> marks the first day of re-enrollment for students currently attending St. Paul's. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, enrollment will open up to church members and siblings of current students. Enrollment will open to the public on January 17<sup>th</sup>. We have been blessed with increasing enrollment and our classes have been filling quickly so don't delay. Please let your friends know that we will be hosting an Open House on January 5<sup>th</sup> if they would like to tour our facility and meet the teachers.

**SHOP WITH SCRIP (a/k/a T.R.I.P.)**  
Going Christmas shopping? Hosting Christmas dinner? Buying gift cards for the people on your list that are impossible to shop for? Shop T.R.I.P. first! It's easy to make money for your child's or grandchild's school account **and** St. Paul's while paying face value for gift cards from over 750 retailers including Amazon, Walmart, Best Buy, Dick's Sporting Goods, Kohl's, Old Navy, Target, Jewel-Osco, i-Tunes, Barnes & Noble! Call or text Julie Salzman at 815-530-7320 to place your order.. The last order will go in on December 5<sup>th</sup> in order to get them before Christmas break. We do carry a stock of cards so you can still place orders after that but there is no guarantee that what you want will be available. You can also download e-cards from the Raise Right app at any time (just make sure you select an e-card and not a gift card)!

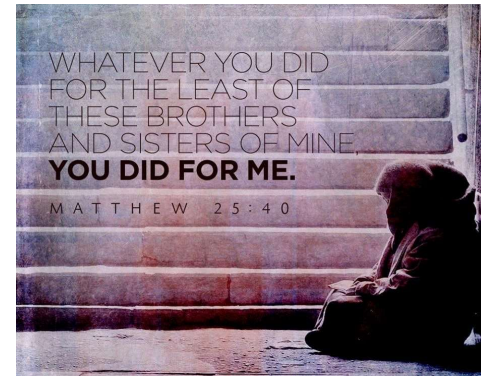


### **VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly will be held on **Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:30 pm** at the school. The Church Council will be announcing its selection of qualified voting members who, together with the pastor(s), shall serve as the Nominating Committee. At this meeting, the voters may submit to the committee the names of possible candidates for the various boards. Please contact the church office if you would like more information about the different boards.

Members of the congregation who are age 18 or older are eligible to become voting members and to participate in the decision making of the congregation. After attending at least two Voters' Assembly meetings in a one-year time period, a member is accepted into voting membership. Voting membership privileges then continue as long as you remain a member of the congregation.

***Please keep in mind that we will be voting on a new principal soon. If you have never attended a meeting but you attend this one in January, you will be eligible to vote on the principal.***



### **HOMELESS MINISTRY**

During the 2021-22 winter season, Fortitude operated a shelter in our old school downtown. They served 63 homeless men and women and Roy Cordes had the privilege of meeting weekly for a 30-minute Bible class that served a total of 18 individuals, but never more than 5 at a time. They studied the theme of "Who is Jesus?"

Due to circumstances, Fortitude has returned for another winter, starting on November 1<sup>st</sup> with 11 people. Since then, the center has been reaching its capacity of 18 and has had to turn some away due to code regulations. You can Google Fortitude to find out more about their program and needs or call Roy Cordes for information (815-304-5002).

"Since I wanted to get a good start on Bible study again this winter I had decided to start with them on the first Thursday in December from 7:15 - 7:45 pm. However on two consecutive days, two different men asked me when I was going to start the Bible study again. My thought was "OK Lord I will listen to you!" We started November 10<sup>th</sup> with an attendance of three. This year we are studying "The Promises of

God," reading Bible passages from a choice of over 1,000 promises in the BIBLE. Pray that we can minister to the needs of the homeless in our area and lead them back to a relationship with God which will bless them despite their circumstances."

~ Roy W. Cordes

### **ST. PAUL'S FOOD PANTRY**

The Board of Human Care distributes food baskets year round and you can help stock our food pantry by bringing in nonperishable food and non-food items like: paper towels, toilet paper, foil, wax paper, tissues, canned beans and vegetables, beef stew, canned chicken, tuna, breakfast cereal, pancake/biscuit mix, syrup, pasta, pasta sauce, canned tomatoes, brownie and cake mix, jello/pudding mix, soups and crackers. As we head into the holidays, now is a great time to reflect on everything that we have been blessed with and to share our gifts with those less fortunate. If you would like to help, you may bring your donations to the school or church.

### **PROJECT COMPASSION & GABRIEL'S CALLERS**

Would you consider joining? Our only agenda is to share God's love and to care for the well-being of our members, especially our shut-ins, those grieving, or anyone with special needs. We meet quarterly, at which time we have devotions and prayer and we share our ministry over a meal. Don't worry about whether or not you have the skills; we will train you. Please contact Pastor Drinnon at [rdrinnon@stpaulslutheran.net](mailto:rdrinnon@stpaulslutheran.net) with questions.



### ALTAR FLOWERS

The Flower Chart for 2023 is now up. The chart will be posted at the downtown church through January 1<sup>st</sup> and then will be moved out to the school. If you would like to sponsor altar flowers in honor of or in memory of someone or some special occasion, please sign up on the chart for your desired weekend. When you sign up for flowers please include your phone number next to your name.



The cost is \$25.00 for one vase or \$50.00 for two. Please make checks payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Checks or cash payments may be put in the offering plate or turned in to the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Lynda Koeppen at 932-1545 or [lykoeppen@comcast.net](mailto:lykoeppen@comcast.net).

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



The Board of Trustees is looking for an additional person to lock and unlock the church downtown and operate the bells, especially over the

upcoming holidays. If you are interested, please call or text Tom Stirnaman at 309-531-1370.

### PLAN NOW TO COME TO MILWAUKEE IN 2023

Lutheran Women in Mission of the North Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, and South Wisconsin Districts invite you to the 40<sup>th</sup> Biennial LWML Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **June 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>**. Opportunities at the LWML Convention abound, under the theme of "Celebrate the Lord of the Nations," to worship, serve God's people, learn of mission opportunities, and fellowship with old and new friends. All are invited to bring families and friends to enjoy a city of diverse culture. Milwaukee is called the "City of Steeples". Attractions include the Discovery World Science Museum, Harley Davidson Museum, Milwaukee Art Museum on the lake, Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, the Milwaukee County Zoo, and the Historic Third Ward. Sign up now to be a worker at the convention and receive reduced registration. Please do this soon so that you can receive your voucher to confirm your early registration fee. **Early registration begins on January 9<sup>th</sup> and ends on January 31<sup>st</sup>**. You need your work voucher in order to register! Please email Sharon Friesner at [sharon.friesner@comcast.net](mailto:sharon.friesner@comcast.net) or call/text to 815-954-5740 if you have questions or need help with completing forms.



### CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

At the September 22, 2022 Voters' Meeting, a motion was made and passed to form a committee for the purpose of reviewing the current constitution, suggesting needed changes, and updating the document with past approved changes.

The committee consists of:

- \* Bill Balgeman
- \* Bob Bohlmann
- \* Katrina Drinnon
- \* Nancy Eden
- \* Barry Gadbois
- \* Christie Rahn

The committee has been meeting, collecting various documents, and seeking input from the current boards and staff members. The following tentative schedule has been developed with regards to future Voters' Meetings:

- ~ **January 2023** - status report
- ~ **May 2023** - status report and presentation of draft/outline
- ~ **September 2023** - 1<sup>st</sup> reading for approval
- ~ **January 2024** - 2<sup>nd</sup> reading for approval and adoption

### OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

|                                                                  |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Baptized .....                                                   | 1798 |
| Communicant .....                                                | 1334 |
| Communing .....                                                  | 459  |
| Attendance Avg. Weekend Worship<br>(as of the end of the month): |      |
| Month .....                                                      | 251  |
| Year-to-date .....                                               | 242  |

### FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCES

(Through 11/13/22)

#### General Fund

Receipts (Envelopes, Plate, Sunday School, School Ops, Electronic): \$277,229.09  
Budgeted Amount: \$337,673.08  
% of Need: 82.10%

#### Building Fund

Receipts(Envelopes+Electronic):  
\$44,357.00  
Budgeted Amount: \$63,461.60  
% of need: 69.90%

### **2023 GIVING ENVELOPES**

The 2023 offering envelopes are now available for pick-up. If you typically attend church on Saturday evening, your envelopes are in Fellowship Hall. If you attend on Sundays, your envelopes are in the hallway outside of the school library. If you have been giving online, you may not have envelopes. If you cannot find yours, please contact the church office at 932-0312. We thank you for your generous spirit. God bless you!

### **NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?**

If you would rather receive St. Paul's bi-monthly newsletter via e-mail, please provide your e-mail address to Christie at [crahn@stpaulslutheran.net](mailto:crahn@stpaulslutheran.net) or call the church office at 932-0312. The newsletter is also posted on St. Paul's website at [stpaulslutheran.net](http://stpaulslutheran.net).

### **BAKER BULLETIN**

The latest Baker Bulletin is enclosed and posted in the entryway at the school. Rev. David Baker and his family are doing missionary work across the globe and love to share their stories. Please note that because of the nature of their ministry, we cannot post the bulletin online.

