

The Visitor

Rev. Karl J. Koeppen,
Senior Pastor

Rev. Roger A. Drinnon,
Associate Pastor

Mrs. Richard C.
Nordmeyer,
Interim Principal

Rev. David Baker,
Missionary to Mongolia

April/May 2024



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*

Office Hours:

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

Church & School Office: 815-932-0312

Church Website: www.stpaulslutheran.net

Next Newsletter Deadline May 15th

SPECIAL DATES

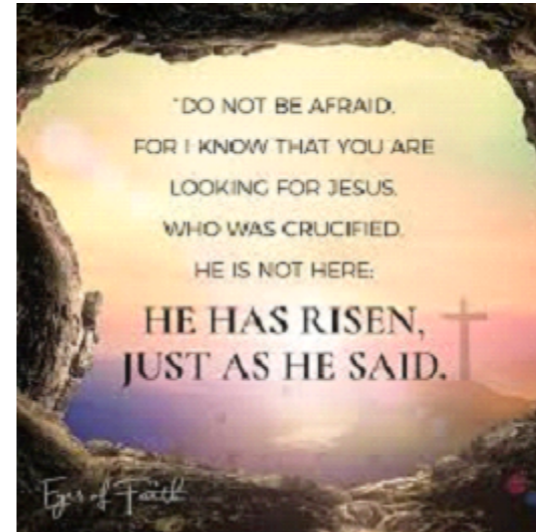
National Day of Prayer - May 2

Ascension of the Lord - May 9

Mother's Day - May 12

Trinity Sunday - May 26

Memorial Day - May 27



PLEASE NOTE: Our 8th graders will be confirmed at the late service on **Sunday, May 5th**. This service will take place at the downtown church. The early service will be at the school as usual.



VOTER'S ASSEMBLY MEETING

The May Voter's Meeting is scheduled for **May 19th at 12:30 p.m.** in the school gym. The main agenda item will be voting on our new board directors and members. These positions are critical to the functioning of our church and its many ministries so if you are interested in participating on any of our boards, please call Bill Balgeman at 815-937-4947 prior to the meeting to add your name to the ballot.

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 two-year time period, a member is accepted into voting membership. Voting membership privileges then continue as long as you remain a member .

NOTE: In the next few months, we will be voting on calls for a new principal and possibly one or two new teachers. If you are not currently a voting member, please consider attending this meeting so that you may be eligible to vote on the upcoming calls.

He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

That is the traditional greeting between Christians after the Easter event. In the greeting, the event of the Easter weekend is implied. The Christians who use this greeting know that Jesus died for their sins. They also believe that Jesus did not stay dead. The day of Easter (the third day of the weekend), Jesus arose from the dead. So as the first Christian says, ***“He is risen!”***, the second Christian acknowledges the truth and replies, ***“He is risen, indeed!”***

What about us?

Do we realize and believe in what the greeting implies? Or do we go through the motions of Easter? Do we conform our lives to the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection, or do we not allow the Easter event to change our lives?

I see both things happening in my life. I can ***“go through the motions”*** of life with no regard to what Jesus did for me. I also see myself ***“on fire”*** for the work of Jesus and following His will and living out my Christian life through faith.

I see it in you too. I see you, on one hand, living average everyday lives with no connection or thought to the Easter event. I also see you grabbing hold of the wonderful Easter event and living your lives in the grace of Jesus Christ and forgiveness and resurrection. . . . I hope that you see this life in yourself.

What has been done about this situation?

The Easter event is the solution.

Jesus died upon the cross in a grizzly and gruesome manner. His blood was spilled and His body given up so that you and I have the forgiveness of sins. Large spikes were driven through His hands and feet. His head held the crown of thorns that cut Him. His head and body received blows over and over. The skin on His back was ripped open by the lashes of a whip; 39 times! Jesus suffered humiliation as He was hung upon the cross (which said to the world the curse of sin) naked for everyone to see. Jesus suffered the agony of a slow and tortuous death of suffocation. Yet Jesus knew what His suffering and death was going to and did accomplish. Jesus knew that He was the sacrificial lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. Even after Jesus' death, ***“man's inhumanity to man”*** came through when the spear of the soldier pierced His ribs and heart. Jesus was laid in a tomb, borrowed from Joseph of Arimethea.



The Sanhedrin was so afraid of the resurrection, they went to Pilate to have the tomb sealed and a guard placed. They thought that the apostles were going to steal the body and claim that Jesus rose from the dead. But no matter how much the leaders tried to prevent the resurrection, they could not stop Jesus from rising from the dead. What is fascinating is the combination of fear and joy, almost simultaneously. It happened to Mary as well as the apostles. Jesus has risen from the dead. ***“I know that my redeemer lives. What comfort this sweet sentence gives.”***

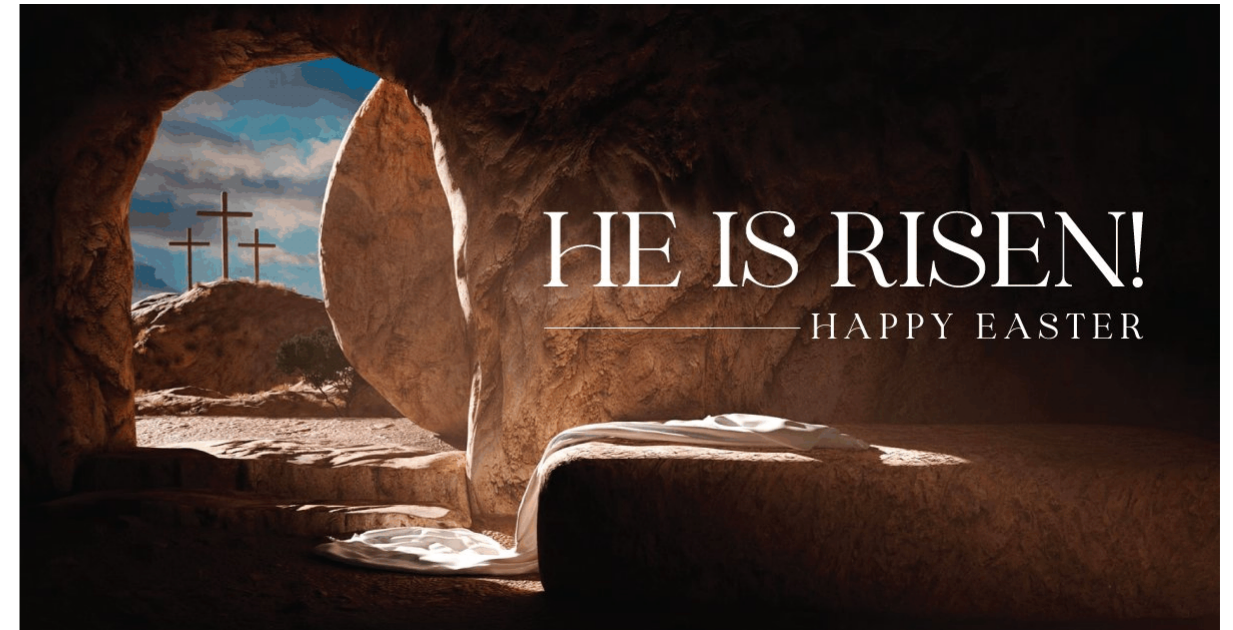
The Easter event guides our life in Jesus.

May the Joy of Jesus' resurrection be yours!

HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

Blessings in the name of our Savior, Jesus!

Pastor Koeppen



Jesus Rose – Nothing Else Matters

The angels said to the women, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.’ And they remembered his words.” (Luke 24:5b-8a)

The words, “He is risen,” brought great joy to the women because they remembered Jesus’ words, “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” The Holy Spirit opened the minds of the women as they gazed into the empty tomb. Jesus’ body was not there. He rose from the dead. This was a miracle unlike any other. No one had ever come back from the dead this way. Every other resurrection in Scripture involved a prophet proclaiming God’s word to the dead individual bringing them back to life.

The life that the resurrected person lived was the same as they had lived before – nothing changed from before their resurrection episode. This was not so with Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus rose with the power of indestructible life. His body changed and death has no power over Him. And so, Jesus’ resurrection signaled a new eon. In this eon, Sin, Death, and the Devil are now powerless and unable to harm God’s people. This new eon is marked by God’s mercy and grace. By dying and rising, God the Son vanquished the old eon marked by Satan’s tyranny. (Job 1:7; Luke 4:6)

Before this, God instituted the Mosaic Covenant to imprison everything under sin. (Gal. 3:22) In other words, the Law cannot bring life, righteousness, or salvation. So what is the purpose of the Law? The Law performs the good function of killing sin, but the Law cannot save us from sin. This is why the resurrection changes everything. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, He is the ransom of sin for many. (Mark 10:45)

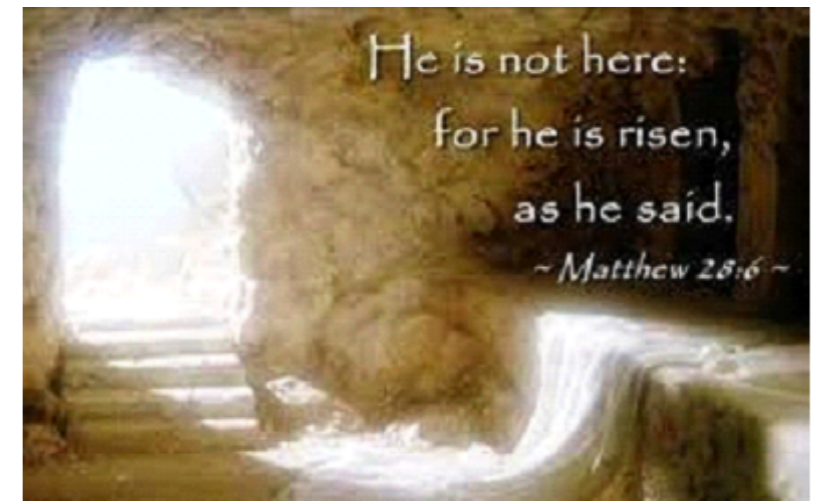
The cosmic battle against sin is over. Jesus won. This means that, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Rom. 10:4) Your sins have no power over you anymore. They have no power to condemn you to death. Death, the great prison, is now abolished for those who believe in Jesus’ promise. And since Christ is eternal and His promise is eternal – nothing else matters.

Your sins, dump them in the trash. They are not yours anymore but now given over to Christ

who became sin for us. (2 Cor. 5:21) Your death, not yours to bear anymore. Christ bore it for you on the cross. When we close our eyes for the last time, we should not fear the unknown – for we know we will be blessed in God’s eternal presence as we wait for the resurrection of the dead. And when Satan attacks, God has given you armor to protect you from the severity of his awful attacks on our minds and faith. (Eph. 6:10-19)

Live life in view of that eternity. Put first things first. Receive the gift of eternity in personal devotion or when you receive God’s grace in Word and Sacrament in public worship. For Christians, Christ’s promise of eternal life is all that matters. This promise does not pull us out of the world and her concerns, but it does orient us correctly to view the world as God views it. The life we live is not our own. We are all bought with a price – the blood of the Son of God. This Easter season, rejoice in the precious gift you have been given. Rejoice in God’s victory over our enemies – Sin, Death, and the Devil. Because Christ won, no other victory, no other accomplishment, no other thing in this life matters.

In Resurrection Joy,
Pastor Drinnon





**BIBLE
STUDY &
FELLOWSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES**

**“CHRIST, THE CONQUERING LAMB:
A BIBLE STUDY ON REVELATION”**

When: Every Sunday at 9:50 am

Location: Room 130

Teacher: Pastor Drinnon

Revelation is a notoriously difficult book to study. Many different interpretations of the book fly about trying to make sense of the vivid imagery of the book and applying that imagery to the news or recent events. Revelation is a series of visions granted to John the Apostle on the island on Patmos. The purpose of these visions to John is not to scare him but to give John comfort as he is in exile. The key to the book of Revelation is Christ – chiefly Christ coming in power to deal with sin in power. The ascended Lord reigns in power and uses his power for the good of His people. Christ promises that He will break all forces that oppose Him. Revelation gives comfort that good, in the end, overcomes evil. The difficult passages involving violence underscore the seriousness with which God deals with sin and the totality of His judgement. This Bible study gives you the tools to read John’s apocalypse and the comforting message it brings: grace given in water, blood, and spirit. This study will begin April 28th. To sign up, please call the church office or email rdrinnon@stpaulslutheran.net.

“GOSPEL OF MARK” BIBLE STUDY

When: 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 6-8 pm

Location: Resource Room

Teacher: Pastor Drinnon

Mark’s gospel is traditionally symbolized with a lion – recounting the first verses of the gospel, “The voice of one crying aloud in the wilderness.” In Mark, we see Christ coming to inaugurate the Kingdom of God through the preaching and teaching of who He is – the One who will be the ransom for many. Join us to dig deeper into Scripture and to grow in knowledge, faith, and service to our Lord. This Bible study is livestreamed and the link is available on the *St. Paul’s Lutheran Church & School Community Group* Facebook page.

MEN’S BIBLE BREAKFAST

Pastor Koeppen will be leading the Bible Study “Christianity and the Competition” on **Sat., April 27th**. Please join him at **7:30 am in the Riverside cafeteria** to study God’s Word over coffee and breakfast. (There will be no Bible Breakfast in May.)

FELLOWSHIP DINNER

You are invited to our monthly fellowship dinners. No special commitment is expected and these evenings are very casual – just come as you are when you are able. Anyone who has come at least once will tell you how much fun we have! We will be meeting next on **Fri., April 19th** and **Fri., May 17th** - locations TBD. Please join us!



CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL

If your have a child in PreK - 5th grade, they are invited to join us for Sunday School every week between the early and late church services. Sunday School begins at 9:50 am and ends at 10:45 pm. There will be a Bible lesson and a game and/or activity that relates to the story.

Preschoolers and kindergartners meet in the extended care room at the west end of the school. Elementary age children begin in the music room just outside of the gym and then disburse to different classrooms in the upper grade hallway. Children will be rewarded for attending Sunday School with small prizes throughout the year.

YOUTH NIGHTS

All 7th through 12th graders are invited to Youth Nights. The youth will be meeting from **6 pm to 8 pm** on **Sunday, April 7th & April 23rd**. Bringing God’s Word to life in a fun and interactive way!

WEEKLY YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

Each Sunday morning, all 6th through 12th graders are invited to the new Youth Room (next to the school library) for Bible study between the church services. There are extra events and fundraisers that happen throughout the year so watch for details on other fun things coming up. Youth are encouraged to bring friends and adults are invited to get involved. Please contact Sarah Cherry at sarahcherry30@yahoo.com or 815-651-6864 with any questions.



SAVE THE DATE!!!

St. Paul’s will be hosting VBS this summer from **Monday, June 10th through Thursday, June 13th**. We will be taking kids deep into an amazing undersea adventure where they’ll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. At *Scuba VBS*, kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about!



PHIL'S FRIENDS PROJECT UPDATE

The Phil's Friends Hope Center project is slowly progressing. Our first work day produced 24 journals and cards. Our next work day is **Sat., April 6th** at the school. At this event, we will coloring boxes and continuing to work on our journals and cards. There may also be fleece blankets to tie if we have fleece donations.

ANNUAL BENEFIT CAR SHOW

Caleb's Prayer Foundation was formed ten years ago in memory of Caleb Hoggins, who lost his battle with cancer at the age of 15. The foundation helps families in Kankakee and Iroquois counties who are also battling cancer. The main source of income for the foundation is a benefit car show held at Phillips Auto Group in Bourbonnais. This year's event is **Sunday, May 19th** (rain date June 2nd). Registration for car entries is from 9 am to 11 am and the entry fee is \$20. This event opens to the viewing public at noon and is FREE. Grilled burgers and hot dogs, chips, and drinks are available for purchase. 100% of the profit goes to local families. If you would like more information, please contact Christie at crahn@stpaulslutheran.net or 815-932-0312. We hope to see you there!



PROJECT COMPASSION / GABRIEL'S CALLERS

Project Compassion Visitors & Gabriel's Callers will have their quarterly meeting at Chicago Dough on **Wednesday, May 15th at 6 p.m.** Visitors & Callers will meet for fellowship, sharing and food. Anyone interested in becoming a visitor or caller is welcome to attend. Please call the church office at 815-932-0312 to RSVP.

PHIL'S FRIENDS PACKING PARTY

We are hosting our first, of hopefully many, Phil's Friends Packing Parties of 2024 on **Sat., April 27th** at the Kankakee campus in Fellowship Hall. Our goal is to pack and pray over 40 care packages that day. We will also tour the space that will become the home of the Kankakee Hope Center. We will pray over the space and dream big about what it will become. Please join us from **9:30 to 11:00 am** that day! Please use the alley entrance.

ZONE 18 LWML SPRING RALLY

On **Saturday, April 20th**, the Lutheran Women in Mission will meet at the school for their Spring Rally. **Registration begins at 8:30 am and the meeting begins with a light breakfast at 9:00 am.** Our guest speaker is Rev. Chris Singer of Lutheran Church Charities (LCC). There will be a free will offering in support of the various ministries of LCC. A short business meeting and election of officers will follow. There will also be service projects to complete during the meeting. Come and enjoy a morning of Christian fellowship and serve the Lord with gladness. All women, young women and teens are invited to attend.

BOOK COLLECTION REMINDER



St. Paul's will once again be doing a used book booth at Prairieview's Fall Festival in September and ***we are in need of books.*** There are collection bins at both locations. At the school, you may place your books in the labeled red donation box. At the church, there is a red container in the atrium just inside the alley doors. If you have any questions, if you would like to arrange a time to drop off, or if you need to schedule a pick-up, please call Jeanne Vilt at 815-932-9855, call or text her at 815-216-0240, or call or text Nancy Campbell at 815-592-4273.



PHIL'S FRIENDS NEEDED ITEMS

We are looking for donations of Thrivent Action Team cards to purchase fleece or if you like to shop for fleece we find that the best way to cost effectively buy it is to purchase 1 ½ yards of a print and matching solid color piece of blizzard fleece when on sale or to buy 72" kits (without words) when on sale. We can always use donations of puzzle books, small packs of tissues, new playing cards, lip balm, 5 oz lotions, and travel size toothpaste. There are donation boxes at both campuses - by the elevator at church and in one of the red donation boxes in the school lobby. If you would like to donate money to the Phil's Friend's project, we will use the money to buy care package items that are not collected through donation and for needed storage items. Please make checks payable to St. Paul's with Phil's Friends in the memo line or send the money in a separate, marked envelope.



ST. PAUL’S SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

We have certainly been blessed! Our school enrollment continues to increase year after year. We already have several full classes for the 2024-25 school year so don’t delay if you are interested in enrolling your child(ren) for the next school year.

CULVER’S SHARE NIGHT!

What a great excuse to indulge in a delicious butterburger and a frozen custard treat! Visit Culver’s on **Tuesday, April 9th between 5 pm and 8 pm** to support our 8th graders. All orders (dine-in, drive-thru, and mobile app orders) will benefit the 8th graders fundraising efforts for their class trip. No flyer is needed.



SPRING FUNDRAISER RESULTS

PTL’s Spring Auction & Dueling Pianos event on March 16th was a smashing success! We are overwhelmed by the support and generosity of our school families, congregation members and community! **THANK YOU** to everyone who came out to the event and to those who contributed items or money to the event. It was an amazing night of fun and fellowship!

Our goal was \$20,000. We raised over \$40,000!! All profits will be used on new desks for the upper grade classrooms, teacher stipends for classroom supplies, new athletic equipemnt, future PTL events, and more!

A huge **THANK YOU** to God for his work in us, and to all those who diligently prayed for our team of parents and teachers who made this event possible.



There are lots of opportunities to earn school partnership hours through the church!

LAWNMOWING & LANDSCAPING

Now that spring is here, we are looking for two or three more people who would be willing to help maintain the school grounds. We have a lot of land but many hands make light work so if you have a few hours to spare once a week or even once every other week, we would be very grateful for your help. Please contact Barry Gadbois at 815-933-4144 if you would be willing to help. Thank you!



RUMMAGE SALE HELPERS

Anyone can help! We will especially need a few men for heavy lifting. We are scheduling two-hour sessions for set-up help on **May 7th & 8th and during the sale on May 9th & 10th between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.** If you are interested in helping, please call Carol Ginger (815-922-5525) or Pat Baker (708-772-0933). We thank you for your service and pray that God bless you for serving so faithfully.

TABEA RUMMAGE SALE

We are now accepting donations for our semi-annual rummage sale on **Thurs. & Fri., May 9th & 10th** from 8am to 4pm in the downtown gym. You may leave your treasures by the gym doors on Saturdays before the 5 pm service or you may schedule a time to drop off or pick up with Carol Ginger (815-922-5525) or Pat Baker (708-772-0933). Please DO NOT bring items to the school location. We respectfully ask that all donated clothing is clean. We cannot accept TVs or computers. The proceeds from our sales help purchase much needed supplies such as candles, wine, wafers, robes and other necessities that help enhance all church services. We thank you for your donations! May God bless you and your families for helping so faithfully.



WITNESS MOMENT

The Board of Outreach & Connections is sponsoring occasional moments of witness (or testimonials) from your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to share the good work of our Lord. It is not a surprise that the national news seems to be full of Satan’s victories. Instead of focusing on that, we want to proclaim the victories of our Good and gracious Lord. If you wish to share how God has worked in your life (through His guidance, healing, or blessing through joyous and difficult times), please talk to one of the pastors. They will direct you to a member of the Board of Outreach & Connections.

DO YOU SHOP AT MENARD’S?

Springtime.....synonymous with home improvement projects, deep cleaning, and of course landscaping! If you make purchases at Menards and do not intend to mail in the rebate slip, please consider donating your rebate receipts to the church. Simply drop them off at the church office or put them in the collection plate. Our custodians and trustees shop at Menards regularly and your rebates would go to great use!



SCORE RECYCLING CONTEST

The SCORE recycling contest is coming to an end in April so bring your cans before it’s too late. We are currently in 4th place. Let’s finish strong!! The more we collect, the more the school earns! You can also bring them directly to Belson. When you bring your ticket to the cashier, just tell them you’d like the points to go to St. Paul’s. Thank you!!

SHOP WITH SCRIP (a/k/a T.R.I.P.)

Don’t forget about SCRIP as we head into spring! 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 Dick’s Sporting Goods, Ace Hardware, Menards, Lowe’s, Home Depot, Amazon, Walmart, several hotels and airlines, and so much more! Stop by the church office or call or text Julie Dummer at 815-530-7320 to place your order. You can also order gift cards and download e-cards from the Raise Right app.



NEW CARD CART MINISTRY

Do you have a minute (or two or five) to stop by this colorful cart in the cafeteria between worship services Sunday to color and/or sign a card of hope to let those going through tough times know that they aren’t alone? Come check out our new card cart in the cafeteria!



FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP

STATISTICS

Baptized	1816
Communicant	1334
Communing	279
Attendance Avg. Weekend Worship (as of the end of the month):	
Month	261
Year-to-date	267

YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCES

(through March 10th)

Thankofferings

Receipts (Envelopes, Plate, Sunday School + Electronic): \$598,503.70
Budgeted Amount: \$588,798.02
% of Need: 101.65%

Building Fund

Receipts(Envelopes+Electronic): \$117,132.92
Budgeted Amount: \$122,155.50
% of need: 95.89%

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.

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 or call the church office at 932-0312. The newsletter is also posted on our website at www.stpaulslutheran.net.

