

The Visitor

Rev. Karl J. Koeppen,
Senior Pastor

Rev. Roger A.
Drinnon,
Associate Pastor

Mr. Brian P. Porter,
Principal

Rev. David Baker,
Missionary to Mongolia

Rev. Ross Engel,
Adopt-a-Chaplain

December
2024/
January
2025



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 9:45 am @ the School

Classes for Adults & 6th - 12th grade

Children's Sunday School:

Sunday 9:45 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



SPECIAL DATES

- * Christmas Break, Dec. 23 - Jan. 3
- * First Day of Winter, December 21
- * Christmas, December 25
- * New Year's Day, January 1
- * Epiphany, January 6
- * Baptism of the Lord, January 12
- * Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 20
- * Lutheran Schools Week, Jan 26 - Feb 1

2025 GIVING ENVELOPES

The 2025 offering envelopes will be available for pick-up by December 8th. If you typically attend church on Saturday evening, your envelopes will be in Fellowship Hall. If you attend on Sundays, your envelopes will be 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!



ADVENT DEVOTIONS

Join us as we spend time in God's Word, using the Lutheran Hour Ministries' devotion, "Come, Let Us Adore Him". 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/.

In this devotion, we see that God deserves our worship and praise for all that He has done for us. And in the birth of Jesus into our world, born to save us from our sins, born to give us eternal life - God has given us His very Best. To which we can only respond: "Come, Let Us Adore Him!"

The events surrounding Jesus' birth - the prophecies foretold and fulfilled, the birth of John to point to Jesus, the divine way God guided Mary and Joseph, the preservation of Jesus' life from King Herod - all speak to God's intimate involvement in our salvation. This is the God we adore - the God who spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all. We pray these devotions help you in this season to focus on the coming Messiah, Jesus!

It's OKAY

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost." Luke 19:10

Dear Friends in Christ!

We have entered the festival season of the Church Year. God invites us to *"Listen through story, through music, through gift."* God has great blessings and surprises in store for us.

I wish you God's greatest blessings as we journey through this Advent Season and into Christmas and New Year's celebrations.

This, however, is also a time of year when many feel frustrated, lonely, and overwhelmed. I am fearful that we too often miss out on spiritual growth and discipleship opportunities because we are too busy with other aspects of this busy time of year.

Please allow me to share a few thoughts for the season, then, from my heart to yours.

During this busy season of celebration, it's OK to slow down.

It seems at this time of year we all tend to push the accelerator a little harder, fill the days with more activities, and add to the "to do" list. It may be a good spiritual discipline during this busy time to "schedule" time to not be busy. Maybe it's a Tuesday morning. Maybe it's 15 minutes before bedtime. Maybe it's first thing in the morning. It's a great season to dedicate "slowdown" time to reading Scripture, just listening to God in silence, listening to music and breathing deeply.

During this busy season of celebration, it's OK to say "no."

Opportunities exist in every corner to fill schedules, often leading us to feeling *"maxed out."* We don't like to miss out on activities. We don't like to be known as people or families who don't want to be involved (but you don't want to get burned out either!) So, this is a good time of year to NOT do everything, see everything, be a part of everything. Saying "no" to one or two, or more, activities that take up time and energy can be a great way of clearing our minds, setting our priorities in order, and creating time to focus on the true and greatest gift in this season.



During this busy season of celebration, it's OK to set limits.

Too much of anything usually leads to imbalances of some nature. While we enjoy the celebrations of the season, from food to gifts to company, may we be mindful of the giver of those gifts. May we also be reminded to use those gifts as the giver intended.

Christ is King. He Reigns. The reason for the season, the baby born in Bethlehem, centers on the expecting couple giving birth to a Son. Jesus is born! Pregnancy, birth, those early months of an infant's life, demand change in the life of the parents and family.

We are part of the family of God!

May our lives change in response to the presence of the newborn King.

Blessings in the name of our coming Savior, Jesus!

Pastor Koeppen



“NEW LIFE Resolutions...”

Have you ever seen those “*man on the street*” interviews, asking people what their New Year’s Resolutions were? Many of the responses are the old standbys: Eat healthier and exercise. But there are new ideas creeping in like: Talking on the cell phone less.

A pastor told of a time he was watching the news report and an older gentleman simply replied: “*To read Scripture more.*”

Now, I was surprised that something like that was actually allowed to air on national television, but it was! And that gentleman’s response made me think about not only the New Year we are facing, but also about the “new life” that we Christians are living. St. Paul tells us: “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*”

Everyone tends to make a New Year’s Resolution, yet research would tell us that most people break those resolutions by January 31st or before! How have you done with your New Year’s Resolutions so far.....

You know, . . . because of the power of Holy Baptism, each of us as God’s children are a whole new creation each and every day! We don’t need to wait for a new year to come along to live life in a new way. But it does beg the question . . . *What should we do with this “new life” that we have in Christ? What is it that we can all work on as we grow as disciples?*

To answer those questions, I share with you my top three “NEW LIFE Resolutions!”

1. Strengthening our relationship with God.

This is where it all begins. Without a strong and vibrant relationship with the Lord nothing else can or will be changed in our life. We can strengthen our relationship with God the same way we strengthen any human relationship and that is to SPEND TIME with that person. Spending time with God might mean that we will strive to attend worship more regularly than we have before. It might also be taking more time to study God’s Word both in group Bible study and in our own personal devotions. It could also point to a



more active prayer life where we share our lives with our Lord. No more “talking” about it. . . . Do it! Spend time with the Creator of Heaven and Earth - Our Father in Heaven!

2. Growing in giving and serving.

Once our relationship with God grows, it WILL impact the way that we serve Him and others. We might grow in our ability to give a greater percentage of our income back to the Lord. We might also consider how we might better use the talents and abilities we have been given for the sake of God’s Kingdom. We might even be willing to give a bit more of our precious time to the work of our Lord in the congregation and community.

3. Sharing our faith with others (especially those who don’t believe.)

By growing in our relationship with God and in the ways in which we serve Him, we will hopefully also grow bold enough to share God’s love and the faith He has given to us with those around us in life (everyone from our next door neighbor to the family member that still doesn’t believe in Jesus Christ.) . . . This resolution might seem like the most challenging for some, but with God’s love and power behind us we can do it.

While these “*New LIFE Resolutions*” certainly aren’t the only way to grow in our new lives in Christ, they are a step in the right direction.

And remember these resolutions are different from the New Year’s variety because if we fail in keeping them on any one day, we know that by God’s grace we are forgiven and can begin anew each and every day! So let’s embrace the New Year 2025 with joy and thanks, but let’s embrace each day of 2025 knowing that we are a “new creation” with a new life to live thanks to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Blessings in the name of the PRINCE OF PEACE!!!

Pastor Koeppen

The Holidays Beyond Christmas

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

*“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,*

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” (Matthew 2:16-18)

Ancient Christian tradition places three holidays after Christmas Day. These three holidays on the Christian calendar are the Martyrdom of St. Stephen (December 26th), the Festival of the Apostle John (December 27th), and the Commemoration of the Holy Innocents (December 28th). Not only are these holidays seemingly disconnected with Christmas, but they also do not conform to our expectations of celebrating the Christmas season. These three holidays do not have festive songs, tinsel, or the sentimental feelings we associate with Christmas. Sadly, the modern church largely whitewashes the birth of our Lord by ignoring the witness of the Holy Innocents in the story of salvation. While the holidays are all seemingly disconnected from each other, each of these holidays are connected to Christmas by the theme of witness.

Bernard of Clairvaux illustrates the connection these three holidays have with each other in his sermon on the Commemoration of the Holy Innocents:

For the holy One born of Mary did not come in vain, but spread abroad abundantly the name and grace of holiness. Thence surely came the holiness of Stephen, of John, and of the Innocents. It is well for us that these three feasts are associated with the birthday of the Lord, for besides helping us to maintain our devotion, their coming one after another, as a kind of escort makes the fruit of our Lord’s birth more evident. In these three solemnities, three kinds of holiness can be seen, and I think it would be hard to find among humans a fourth. In blessed Stephen we have a martyr both in will and deed; in blessed John we have the will alone; in the blessed Innocents the deed alone.

These three holidays are celebration in succession because they flow out of what happened on Christmas Day. They remind us of the goal and purpose of the Christ child – that He came to die for the sins of the world. God became one of us to redeem His Creation and win for Himself a holy people. These three kinds of witness demonstrate what it means to live holy lives as God’s redeemed creatures. Bernard of Clairvaux further explains what the spiritual implications are for each kind of witness we bear to the world:

- *Stephen was a martyr in human eyes. His willingness to suffer appears most clearly in the fact that on the point of death he was more concerned for his persecutors than for himself.*
- *John was a martyr in the sight of the angels who, being spiritual themselves, could see the spiritual proofs of his dedication.*
- *But these, these Innocents, are clearly your own martyrs, O God; because they do not seem either to humans or angels to have earned any reward, your special favor to them is shown with greater clarity. Out of the mouths of children and of babes you have received perfect praise. The angels sang: Glory to God in the highest and peace to people of good will. That indeed is magnificent but I dare to say not perfect praise, which will be found only when He comes who said: Let the little children come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

This Christmas season, let us be witnesses to Jesus’s love for us. Witnessing is not optional for Christians. Each of us will find ourselves as one of these three types of witnesses to the world. Here are a few ways we can witness this Christmas season:

- By coming to church and participating in all the special services St. Paul’s has to offer during this Christmas season as we prepare for the coming of Christ again to judge the living and the dead.
- To provide comfort and care to those who do not have family or friends this holiday season and to find ways to be with those who are hurting during the holidays.
- By contributing to the mission efforts of the Church to make the news of the birth

of the Christ child be made know to all through supporting Christian education, the sick, and the poor.

Celebrate this Christmas season the joy of Jesus. Sing with the angels, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”* (Luke 2:14) Let your witness be confirmed to the gift that the Christ child gives at His birth – a world redeemed from sin, a world that has a hope and future. All this because God became one of us! Praise Jesus who became an infant for us so that we may be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Amen.

In Christ,
Pastor Drinnon



CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS

PROGRAM



The **SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

will be **December 15th 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.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM PRACTICE

Children from Pre-3 through 6th 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 December is especially important as we get ready to share the Christmas message. In addition, on **December 7th and 14th**, we will meet at the downtown church for practice **from 9 am to 11 am.** December 7th will be for 1st through 6th graders only. December 14th will be for all children participating in the program.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

On **Sunday, December 22nd**, we will have a birthday party for Jesus. There will be no Sunday School on December 29th. Regular classes will resume on January 5th.

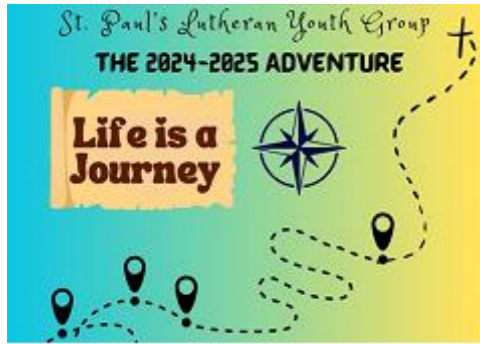


MANGER MAKERS

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 8th 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.

SPECIAL YOUTH NIGHT

Our only December Youth Night will be on **Friday, December 13th from 6pm to 9pm.** It will be full of special Christmas activities including Christmas party games, cookie decorating, Christmas movie, Christmas snacks, and more. Pull out your fun Christmas attire and come enjoy all the Christmas fun!



YOUTH...SAVE THESE DATES!

- ~ Be the Church Movie & Service Night: **Friday, January 3rd, 6-8:30pm** at the school campus
- ~ Sunday youth nights, **6-8pm: Jan 12, Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 9, Mar 30, Apr 13, and May 18th** at the school campus
- ~ Lock-in with Concordia Chicago's CYM team: **Friday, February 7th at 7pm - Saturday, February 8th at 7am** at the school campus.
- ~ Walcamp Service Trip: **Friday, April 25th - Sunday, April 27th**

TRIVIA NIGHT

Save the date: **Friday, February 28th at 6pm** for our annual Trivia Night hosted by St. Paul's Youth Ministry and the 165th Anniversary Committee! This year's Trivia Night will be Mardi Gras themed in honor of the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Gather your team of history nerds, sports enthusiasts, music lovers, wordsmiths, and other lovers of random knowledge and come out for the fun. The cost for a team of 8 is \$100, or come on your own for \$15 and we will match you with some teammates for the night. To add to the fun there will be a table decorating contest and prizes for best dressed themed team. This is a bring your own snacks and drinks event. Some people go all out on food for their table so start coordinating your team and your food. Adult beverages are welcome. Please drink responsibly - youth will be present as graders and event helpers. Let's pack the gym! Get a team together ASAP! Please invite your friends and family and use this QR code to reserve your team's table:



YOUTH MINISTRY COOKIE SALE

Would you like to have a variety of Christmas cookies without the hassle of making them all yourself? Do you like to give scrumptious homemade gifts over the holidays? St. Paul's Youth Ministry is selling boxes of two dozen assorted Christmas cookies for \$15. Order forms are available in the church office, in your bulletin, and during coffee hour. Please complete the order form and place it in the collection plate or return it to the church office *no later than Sunday, December 8th*. Also this year, you can order and/or pay online using these QR codes.



Use this QR code to order



Use this QR code to pay with
a credit card

The cookies will be available for pick-up from the **Bourbonnais campus on Saturday, December 14th between 10am and noon or on Sunday, December 15th between 9am and 11am.** There is also an option to pick them up from the **downtown church on Saturday, December 14th between 4:30pm and 5:15pm.**

New this year: You can purchase a special VIP golden ticket for \$20 for access to a VIP cookie selection opportunity at 8:30am on Saturday, December 14th. VIPs will be paired with a personal cookie shopper to design a customized box. We also will be offering 5 golden tickets for VIP taste testers who are willing to join us on a bake day in December. Contact Katrina Drinnon at 618-975-8361 or katrinadrinnon@gmail.com to learn more.



HOLIDAY WORSHIP BAND

All 6th-12th grade band and orchestra students, along with any adult musicians, are invited to join the Worship Ensemble on **Sunday, December 15th during the 8:30 am worship service.** We will provide music for the pre-service, offertory, and post-service. *Rehearsal will be on Saturday, Dec. 14th at 9 am* in the school gym. Donuts will be provided after the rehearsal. If you are interested, please text Bill Dyche at 815-592-0870 or email him at bill.dyche66@gmail.com. Please include the musician's name, instrument, email, and cell number.

MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST

We meet again **Sat, December 21st & Sat, January 25th at 7:30 am** in the Riverside Hospital Cafeteria. Join us as we study God's Word.



REFRESH, RE-ENERGIZE, & RECONNECT WITH MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Couples gather from **Friday night, March 21st, to Sunday afternoon, March 23rd,** at The Springs Retreat Center in Gladwin, WI to learn and practice new communication techniques taught by Presenter Couples who share their own marriage experiences in inspiring and relatable talks. This will be the last weekend led by Ruth Fabbro's parents, Ed & Emily Kast. To register, visit GodLovesMarriage.org, click on The Springs and Apply Now. The cost is \$100 per couple with a donation opportunity that weekend to cover room & board. Contact Ruth Fabbro with any questions.

TRANSFORMING YOUR PRAYER LIFE

On November 26th, Pastor Dave Bottorff started a new Bible study at his & Marilyn's home (1573 Surrey Drive, Bourbonnais). This series will continue at **7pm on January 23rd.** We will examine many Bible verses on the power of prayer, hindrances in our prayer life and what to do about them with our God-instilled prayer habits and also prayer helps, i. e. prayer partners, prayer groups, prayer chains. Come and have your prayer life reinvigorated and deepened during this Bible study!

NEW BIBLE STUDY

On December 1st, Pastor Drinnon is starting a new Bible study, "Living Faith: A Journey Through James", during coffee hour. Out of all the authors of the New Testament, no other author knew Jesus as long as his half-brother James. The epistle of James reflects James's familiarity with his teachings. James is addressing Christians throughout the early church giving them encouragement to endure trials and to challenge Christians to live as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. In this study, we will explore James' teachings on topics like:

- † Encouragement in Difficult Times (James 1:2-4)
- † Genuine Faith (James 2:14-26)
- † The Right Use of our Tongues (James 3:1-12)
- † A Divided Heart (4:1-10)
- † The Arrogance and Danger of Wealth (4:13-17; 5:1-6)
- † A Life Filled with Prayer (5:7-20)
- † Practical guidance for living as Christians in a fallen world

Whether you're a long-time Bible reader or new to Scripture, the epistle of James offers timeless principles that are sure to strengthen and challenge you. We encourage you to invite friends and family to join in this meaningful journey.

How to Prepare:

- † Bring your Bible and a notebook for notes.
- † Read through James 1 before our first session.

Please come and receive the encouragement James gives to Christians now who are under trial. We can't wait to study God's Word together! If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Pastor Drinnon at rdrinnon@stpaulslutheran.net or 815-932-0312.

ADVENT DINNERS

Our midweek Advent services begin on **Wednesday, December 4th** 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. Stay tuned for details about the meals being served. 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.



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 2025! 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 people at members' homes to share a meal and an evening of fellowship. Those that sign up will be randomly put into groups of eight people that change each month. This makes it ideal for anyone to get involved and a good way to meet people and get to know them. 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. OR 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 25th, February 22nd, March 29th and April 26th** (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 Koeppen at lykoeppen@comcast.net or 815-592-5701 by December 31st.

FELLOWSHIP DINNERS

Everyone is invited to join us for our monthly fellowship dinners. 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 is expected and these evenings are very casual – just come as you are when you are able. Anyone who has come even once will tell you how much fun it is! We will meet again at **6:00 pm on Friday, January 17th at El Mexicano**. Everyone is welcome! Call Nancy Eden at 248-842-2837 to RSVP.



PTL'S ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE!! PTL will be hosting St. Paul's Anniversary Blast & Auction on **Saturday, March 15th** at Quality Inn in Bradley. Join us for an evening of dinner and 60's, 70's, and 80's music (featuring Bill Dyche's band, Cosmic Rewind) as we celebrate our history and God's faithfulness to St. Paul's. Doors will open at 6pm with a cash bar. Dinner will be served at 7pm and the band will entertain us from 7pm to 10pm with intermittent breaks for live auction items throughout the night.

As we have done in the recent past, our silent auction will be online and will open a week before the event and will close at the end of the event. If you work for or own a business that would be willing to donate a basket, service, or a sponsorship, please call the school office for the proper paperwork. 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 event. Our goal is to raise \$100,000. All proceeds from the event will be used to provide teaching supplies for our teachers, an update to our curriculum, and a shade structure for the playground. More information to follow. Thank you for your support!

BRADLEY CHRISTMAS PARADE

On **Friday, December 6th**, the Village of Bradley will present their annual lighted Christmas parade beginning at 6:30 pm. This year's theme is "Cartoon Christmas" and St. Paul's PTL is entering a Polar Express float! We would love to have you walk with us alongside the float. If you are interested, scan the QR code or go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F044FAAA92EA6F94-53337509-bradley> to sign up.. The more walkers we have, the bigger impact we'll make as witnesses!





**DAY SCHOOL
CHRISTMAS CONCERTS**

Is there anything sweeter than the sound of little voices sharing the good news of Jesus' birth? **The preschoolers will sing their little hearts out on Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30 pm. Then on Thursday, December 19th, the Kindergarten through 8th graders will sing at 6:30 pm.**

**ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT**

January 7th marks the first day of re-enrollment for students currently attending St. Paul's. On January 13th, enrollment will open up to church members and siblings of current students. Enrollment will open to the public on January 21st. We have been blessed with increasing enrollment over the years so don't delay.

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, Barnes & Noble! Call or text Julie Salzman at 815-530-7320 to place your order. **The last order will go in on December 9th 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 order gift cards and download e-cards from the Raise Right app.



Thanks to Bob Steinke and his tractor for hauling the pile of lime into the solar field and to Dave Harms, John Veers, Bob Carruthers, Greg Wheeler, and Matt and Loree Yoakum for spreading it around.

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MEETING

A regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly will be held on **Sunday, January 19th 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.



ALTAR FLOWERS

The Flower Chart for 2025 will be posted at the downtown church beginning November 23rd through the month of December and then will be moved to the school site on January 5th. 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. If you would like both vases for a weekend, please sign your name on both lines for that weekend. When you sign up for flowers, please include your phone number next to your name! Thank you!

The cost is \$25.00 for one vase or \$50.00 for two. Please make checks payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Checks can be put in the offering plate or turned in to the church office. If you have any questions regarding altar flowers, please contact Lynda Koeppen at 592-5701 or lykoeppen@comcast.net.

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 St. Paul’s website at stpaulslutheran.net.



BAKER BULLETIN

The latest Baker Bulletin is enclosed. 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.

OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP

STATISTICS

| | |
|--|------|
| Baptized | 1805 |
| Communicant | 1327 |
| Communing | 459 |
| Attendance Avg. Weekend Worship (as of the end of the month): | |
| Month | 256 |
| Year-to-date | 259 |

FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE

FINANCES

(Through 11/3/24)

General Fund

Receipts (Envelopes, Plate, Sunday School, School Ops, Electronic):
\$232,429.06
Budgeted Amount: \$288,346.14
% of Need: 80.61%
















Building Fund

Receipts(Envelopes+Electronic):
\$54,350.21
Budgeted Amount: \$60,576.84
% of need: 89.72%

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Traditional SAT 5:00 pm - Downtown Campus (D)
 Traditional SUN 8:30 am - Bourbonnais Campus (B)
 Contemporary SUN 11:05 am - Bourbonnais Campus (B)
 Sunday School/Adult & Youth Bible Class SUN 9:50 am - Bourbonnais Campus (B)

December

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| 1 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 9:45am Assimilation Class (B) 11:05am Worship (B) | 2 7:00pm Lay Ministry Meeting (B)  | 3 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation (B)  | 4 5:30pm Advent Dinner (D) 7:00pm Worship (D)  | 5 6:00pm Bourbonnais Tree Lighting @ The Grove  | 6 6:30pm Bradley Christmas Parade (Broadway)  | 7 9:00am SS Christmas Practice (D) 5:00pm Worship (D)  |
| 8 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 9:45am Assimilation Class (B) 11:05am Worship (B) | 9 DEADLINE TO ORDER RAISE RIGHT GIFT CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS  | 10 6:30pm School Board Meeting (B) 6:30pm Preschool Christmas Program (B)  | 11 5:30pm Advent Dinner (D) 7:00pm Worship (D)  | 12 5:00pm Gospel of Mark Bible Study (B) | 13 6:00pm Youth Christmas Party (B) | 14 9:00am SS Christmas Practice (D) 9:00am Worship Band Practice (B) 10:00am Christmas Cookie Sale (B) 4:30pm Christmas Cookie Sale (D) 5:00pm Worship (D)  |
| 15 8:30am Worship (B) 9:00am Christmas Cookie Sale (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 9:45am Assimilation Class (B) 11:05am Worship (B) 5:00pm SS Christmas Program (D) | 16 7:00pm Church Council (B)  | 17 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation (B)  | 18 5:30pm Advent Dinner (D) 7:00pm Worship (D)  | 19 6:30pm School Christmas Program (B) | 20 EARLY DISMISSAL 11:15 / 11:30 am  | 21 7:30am Men's Bible Breakfast (Riverside) 5:00pm Worship (D)  |
| 22 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B) | 23 CHRISTMAS BREAK | 24 Christmas Eve OFFICE CLOSED 5:00pm Candlelight Service (D) 7:00pm Candlelight Service (D) 10:00pm Candlelight Service (D) | 25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED 10:00am Christmas Worship (D)  | 26 CHRISTMAS BREAK | 27 9:00am Poinsettia Pick-Up (D)  | 28 5:00pm Worship (D)  |
| 29 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 11:05am Worship (B) | 30 CHRISTMAS BREAK | 31 New Years Eve OFFICE CLOSED 6:00pm New Years Eve Worship (D)  | CHRISTMAS BREAK  | | | Communion is celebrated the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month  |



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Traditional SAT 5:00 pm - Downtown Campus (D)
 Traditional SUN 8:30 am - Bourbonnais Campus (B)
 Contemporary SUN 11:05 am - Bourbonnais Campus (B)



January

Sunday School/Adult & Youth Bible Class SUN 9:50 am - Bourbonnais Campus (B)

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | |
|--|---|--|---------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------|
| | | | 1 NEW YEARS DAY | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| | | | CHRISTMAS BREAK | | | | 5:00pm Worship (D) |
| | | | OFFICE CLOSED | | 6:00pm Be The Church / Youth Movie Night | | |
| 5 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B) | 6 | 7 Re-Enrollment Opens | 8 | 9 5:00pm School Registration Open House 6:00pm Gospel of Mark Bible Study (B) | 10 | 11 5:00pm Worship (D) | |
| 12 8:30am Worship (B) 9:30am New Member Reception (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B) 6:00 pm Youth Night (B) | 13 Enrollment for Siblings & Church Members Opens 7:00pm Lay Ministry Meeting (B) | 14 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation Class (B) 6:30pm School Board Meeting (B) | 15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE | 16 | 17 EARLY DISMISSAL 11:15 / 11:30 am 6:00pm Fellowship Dinner (El Mexicano) | 18 5:00pm Worship (D) | |
| 19 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B) 12:30pm Voters Meeting (B) | 20 MLK Jr. Day - NO SCHOOL 7:00pm Church Council Meeting (B) | 21 Enrollment for New Families Opens 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation Class (B) | 22 | 23 6:00pm Gospel of Mark Bible Study (B) 7:00pm Transforming Your Prayer Life (1573 Surrey Dr., Bourb) | 24 | 25 7:30am Men's Bible Breakfast (Riverside) 5:00pm Worship (D) 6:00pm Tables of Eight | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK | | | Communion is celebrated the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month | |
| 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B) 6:00 pm Youth Night (B) | | | | | | | |



Serving our Lord in December

| <i>ACOLYTE SCHEDULE</i> | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Sun, December 1 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Nolan Freitas, Luke Stirnaman Jacob Kubal, Annie Schneider |
| Wed., December 4 | 7:00 pm | Ava & Jackson Veasey |
| Sun., December 8 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Mo Macari, Quinn Styck Daphne & Delilah Sexton |
| Wed., December 11 | 7:00 pm | Layna Rahn, Olivia Reardanz |
| Sun., December 15 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Brody Brinkmann, Micah Lundmark Emma Davis, Miles Davis |
| Wed., December 18 | 7:00 pm | Gloria Morocho Loja, Trenton Stephens |
| Sun., December 22 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Ava & Jackson Veasey Audrey Nordmeyer, Claire Wilson |
| Tues., December 24 | 5:00 pm 7:00 pm 10:00 pm | Brody Brinkmann (crossbearer), Norah Callan, Micah Lundmark Gavin Woods (crossbearer), Luke Stirnaman, J.P. Woods Dylan Blair (crossbearer), Dain Blair, Lucas Porter |
| Wed., December 25 | 10:00 am | Nora McHugh (crossbearer), Aidan & Nolan LaVoie |
| Sun., December 29 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Mason Raloff, Trevor Smith Jacob Kubal, Ty Luhman |
| Sat., December 31 | 6:00 pm | Nora McHugh, Quinn Styck |

| <i>LAY READERS SCHEDULE</i> | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Sat., Nov. 30 Sun., Dec. 1 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Diane Barber Ruth Fabbro David Bottorff | Sat., Dec. 7 Sun., Dec. 8 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Pat Hatch JoAnn Hess Bill Dyche |
| Sat., Dec. 14 Sun., Dec. 15 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Rich Nordmeyer John Veers Mellody McDonald | Sat., Dec. 21 Sun., Dec. 22 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Jennifer Richardson Lauren Lundmark Debbie Turrell |
| Sat., Dec. 28 Sun., Dec. 29 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Ken Ebert Bill Balgeman Karen Beatty | | | |

SEE TRUSTEE SCHEDULE ON REVERSE

TRUSTEE SCHEDULES

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <u>ADVENT SERVICES</u> Wed., Dec. 4 - Jeff Johnson Wed., Dec. 11 - Jeff Johnson Wed., Dec. 18 - Jeff Johnson | Sat. & Sun., Nov. 30 & Dec. 1 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau | Sat & Sun., December 7 & 8 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler |
| Sat. & Sun., December 14 & 15 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Brian Porter 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau | Sat. & Sun., December 21 & 22 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler | <u>CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES</u> 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 7:00 pm - Rob Wood 10:00 pm - TBD |
| <u>CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE</u> 10:00 am - Terry Treece | Sat. & Sun., December 28 & 29 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau | <u>NEW YEARS EVE SERVICE</u> 6:00 pm - Rob Wood |



Serving our Lord in January

| <i>ACOLYTE SCHEDULE</i> | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Sun., January 5 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Layna Rahn, Annie Schneider Lucas Porter, Beth Schreurs | | | |
| Sun., January 12 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Gloria Morocho Loja, Maci Proctor Norah Callan, Claire Wilson | | | |
| Sun., January 19 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Aidan & Nolan LaVoie Dain & Dylan Blair | | | |
| Sun., January 26 | 8:30 am 11:05 am | Olivia Reardanz, Ryleigh Reiniche Daphne & Delilah Sexton | | | |
| <i>LAY READERS SCHEDULE</i> | | | | | |
| Sat., January 4 Sun., January 5 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 10:00 am | Karen Beatty Loree Yoakum Josh Cherry | Sat., January 11 Sun., January 12 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Ken Ebert Ruth Fabbro Melody McDonald |
| Sat., January 18 Sun., January 19 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Jennifer Richardson Loree Yoakum Debbie Turrell | Sat., January 25 Sun., January 26 | 5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am | Audra Taylor Nancy Eden Melody Trudeau |
| <i>TRUSTEE SCHEDULE</i> | | | | | |
| Sat & Sun., January 4 & 5 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau | | Sat & Sun., January 11 & 12 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Brian Porter 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler | | Sat. & Sun., January 18 & 19 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau | |
| Sat & Sun, January 25 & 26 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Brian Porter 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler | | | | | |



Order Your Poinsettias

Christmas is just around the corner. We will be decorating the church again this year with poinsettias. If you would like to purchase a plant or plants to help beautify the chancel for our Christmas services, please mark and **return the form below to the church office with your payment no later than Tuesday, December 3rd**. If you have any questions, call the church office at 932-0312.

Please choose one of the following:

- I will pick up my poinsettia(s) after the 10:00 am Christmas Day service on Wednesday, December 25th.
- I will pick up my poinsettia(s) at 9:00 am on Friday, December 27th in Fellowship Hall.
- Please deliver my poinsettia(s) to a shut-in.

Qty. _____ poinsettia(s) at \$17.00 each.

Given by: _____

In Memory of: _____

Phone: _____

Christmas Cookie Sale

Sat, December 14th
Sun, December 15th



Would you like to have a variety of Christmas cookies without the hassle of making them all yourself? Do you like to give scrumptious homemade gifts over the holidays? St. Paul's Youth Ministry will be selling boxes of two dozen assorted Christmas cookies for \$15. Each box will contain 8 different kinds of cookies. There will be a window at the top of the box so you can choose the combination of cookies that you prefer. You may also buy a box to donate to a shut-in or other service organization.

See reverse for order form

Cookie Sale Order Form

What: Two Dozen Assorted Homemade Christmas Cookies

Cost: \$15 per box

How: Complete this form and place it in the collection plate or return it to the church office with payment* by Sunday, December 8th, then come pick out your pre-packed box of assorted cookies on (choose one):

- Sat, Dec. 14th between 10 am and 12 pm at the Bourbonnais campus
- Sat, Dec. 14th between 4:30 pm and 5:15 pm at the Kankakee campus
- Sun, Dec. 15th between 9 am and 11 am at the Bourbonnais campus

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

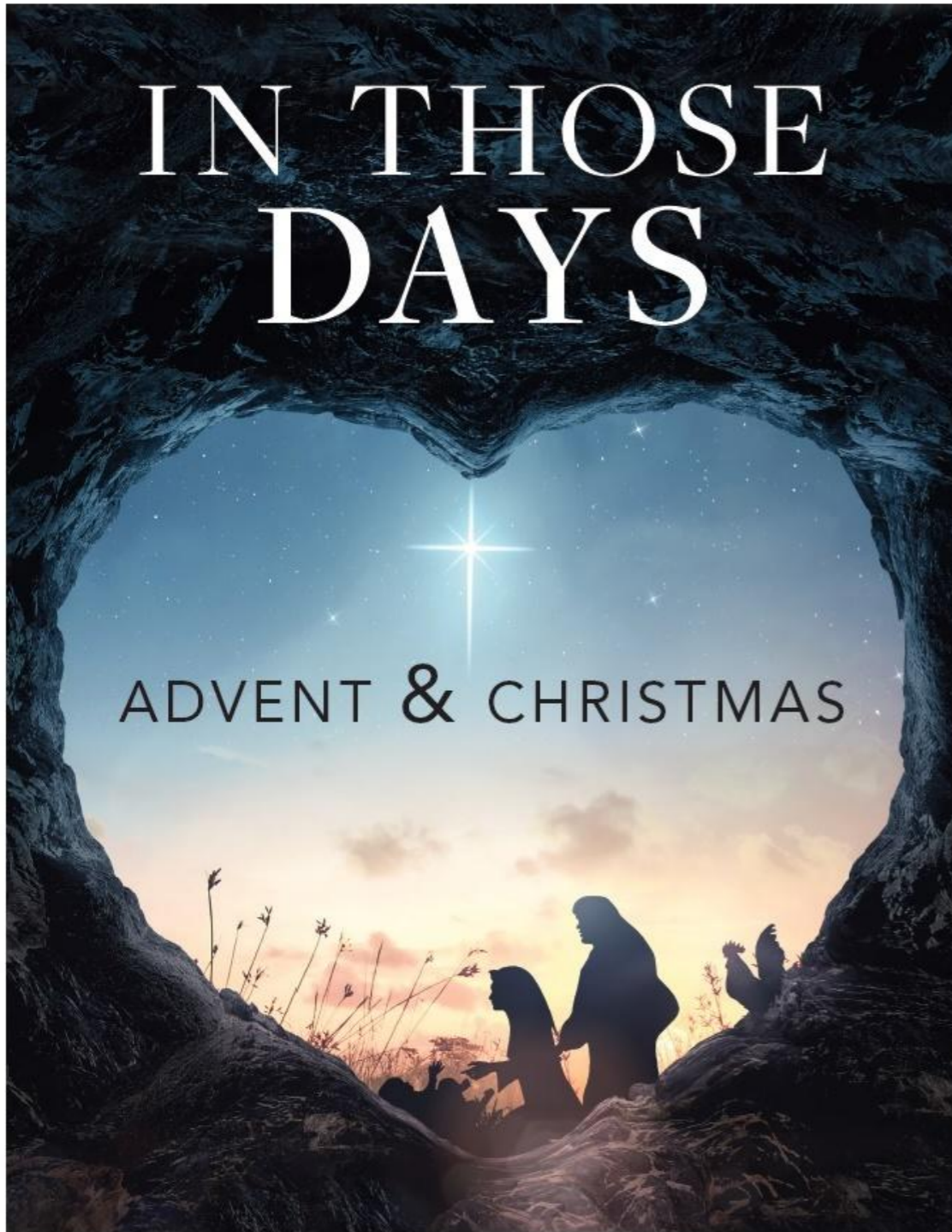
Number of Boxes _____

Total Due _____

We can accept cash or checks (payable to St. Paul's Youth) or you may use this QR code to pay by credit card.



Orders must be placed by December 8th!



IN THOSE DAYS!!

The season of Advent is characterized by waiting - waiting upon the Lord for His presence to be revealed to us on Christmas. This series of worship services for the Sundays of Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day celebrates the events "in those days," the time when our Savior was born. As we light the candles on the Advent wreath, we remember an emperor's decree, a journey to Bethlehem, the search for a home, the birth of a firstborn son, news for shepherds and a sign from God.

All Midweek Advent, Christmas, and New Year's Eve services are held at the downtown church - 348 East Merchant, Kankakee.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!

Wednesday Midweek Advent - 12/4, 11, 18 - 7:00pm - Church Campus

Tuesday, 12/24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm - Church Campus

Wednesday, 12/25 - Christmas Day Service

10:00am - Church Campus

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**Weekend Worship Services**

Saturday, 5:00pm - Church Campus

Sunday, 8:30am and 11:05am - School Campus

**Tuesday, 12/31 - New Year's Eve Service**

6:00pm - Church Campus

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School Campus**

1780 Career Center Road, Bourbonnais

**Downtown Church Campus**

348 East Merchant Street, Kankakee

**Annversary Thanksgiving Celebration**  
**Newsletter/weekly email article—Jan. 2025**

By now you hopefully are very much aware of our 160/165<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thanksgiving Celebration, which began in August with the kickoff of the **160<sup>th</sup> consecutive** year of St. Paul's Lutheran School, beginning before the end of the Civil War!! Evidence of God's great faithfulness through the ups and downs of life here on earth. And then we celebrated Oktoberfest in conjunction with our PTL Trunk or Treat at the end of October. If you were not in attendance, you missed an absolutely beautiful God-given Sunday afternoon of fun and fellowship with church and school families!

**On December 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>**, we begin our celebration of God's GRACE, MERCY and FAITHFULNESS to our St. Paul's Lutheran congregation during our regular worship services with special music, authentic decorations, and pictures from our history. Let us all come together to **thank and praise our Heavenly Father**.

We will have the opportunity to come together on **Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> for a night of Trivia**, fellowship, fun and laughter, as we support our precious youth who are preparing to attend the LCMS National Youth Gathering this summer in New Orleans! Brent and I attended NYG for the first time as Adult Volunteers in 2022, and this event was **AMAZING**, seeing over 20,000 Lutheran young people come together to worship the One True God, grow in their faith and be encouraged by their peers. Even if you don't enjoy trivia—and I'm terrible at trivia—consider gathering a group of friends for some good fun and support our Youth.

**The PTL Auction/Anniversary Blast**, the annual event supporting OUR Lutheran School, will be held **Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>** with an 80's theme with Bill Dyche's band providing the rousing entertainment. Generous donors in the past have provided such impactful support, whether it be the night of the event or with auction item donations. Funds raised this year will provide **teacher stipends, a shade structure, and curriculum update**.

Have you taken the opportunity to view the **timeline of St. Paul's** located on the school cafeteria wall? Natalie Cherry LOVES history AND St. Paul's, so researching this information is "right up her alley"! She, Adele Hinze and I are truly enjoying creating this timeline of St. Paul's with the theme "Persevere with Thanksgiving". Be sure to check it out!

You most likely are aware of the displays of Anniversary Thankoffering envelopes, both at school near the north gym entrance and at the downtown campus in the narthex and at the elevator. I pray that you will be moved out of thankfulness to God to bless St. Paul's church and school during this 16-month celebration. For most of us, several smaller donations will work best. It's surprising how the cost of one specialty coffee or latte per week, for example, can add up to a sizable gift to our ministry at St. Paul's. For others, one larger donation works best. May God bless your prayerful consideration.

Let us continue to gather together as one united congregation and school, as we learn, remember and realize how blessed we have been through the years, and continue to carry out the sharing of the eternal life-giving message of Jesus' death and RESURRECTION!!

In His service,

Nancy Eden

Anniversary Thanksgiving Celebration chairman

22 November 2024

Possibility of expanding church memberships in Prairieview Lutheran Homes.

Prairieview Lutheran Homes held three meetings of member congregation delegates (each member congregation having two lay member delegates and one pastor delegate) this year, the purpose of said meetings to explore expanding our church memberships to include other "Trinitarian Christian Denominational Churches". I am one of St. Paul's delegates and have been able to attend two of the three meetings.

Why such discussions? Congregations are generally decreasing in size, church attendance is decreasing (electing to attend services on line may be a factor), income is decreasing resulting in decreasing funds to share with Prairieview, sharing of pastors between two churches – sometimes even three. This is not singularly a Lutheran thing! It is happening in many other denominations also. Unfortunately, more frequent conversations with member congregations has not resulted in increased active participation. Adding 'other' denominations could expand our base, increase donations, and bolster support.

Being a congregational member of Prairieview is NOT about our doctrinal differences. It is, and always will be, about our residents. Their care cannot change! All applications for residency at Prairieview are reviewed without regard to religion and will not change. Currently approximately 50% of residents are Lutheran, others representing a wide variance of denominations. While there are quite a large number of churches, representing many denominations there is no other faith based healthcare facility than Prairieview within a 30 mile radius of Prairieview. The most recent facilities to become secular are Merckle/Clifton and St. Mary's Hospital/Kankakee.

Congregational requirements of membership in Prairieview are:

- a) Pastor leading worship on an assigned Sunday
- b) Monetary donations
- c) 2 lay member and 1 pastoral delegate for annual meeting and other needs
- d) Help with Fall Festival and other activities
- e) Auxiliary to help residents with table/board games, etc.
- f) Ideas to help build Prairieview

Unfortunately these requirements are not met by all current member congregations. The president of the Prairieview Board of Directors, in attendance at these meetings, stated that with this continued decline in active participation, Prairieview will eventually fail. In an effort to avoid such a failure the delegates have approved a resolution prepared by a subcommittee of delegates to expand our church membership to include other "Trinitarian Christian Denominational Churches", without any intent to change the Prairieview Lutheran Homes name, and no control over who can/cannot be on the board with no minimum/maximum of a denomination on the board. This resolution will be discussed and voted upon at the Prairieview Annual Meeting in February, 2025.

Please share your thoughts, questions, and advice on how you would like me to vote on this resolution at 815 922 0656 or [kebert24@comcast.net](mailto:kebert24@comcast.net).

Thank you,  
Kenneth A. Ebert