

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
2025/
January
2026**



**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

- * First Day of Winter, December 21
- * Christmas Break, Dec. 22 - Jan. 5
- * Christmas, December 25
- * New Year's Day, January 1
- * Epiphany, January 6
- * Baptism of the Lord, January 11
- * Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 19
- * Lutheran Schools Week, Jan. 26 - 30

2026 GIVING ENVELOPES

The 2026 offering envelopes will be available for pick-up in early December. 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

This year's Advent devotions, *Born to You ... a Savior*, are now available for pick-up at the downtown church and the school. Feel free to grab one for yourself and one to share!

God in His incomparable love has made a way for us through the wilderness. He did this by giving us His Son, our Light in the darkness. In *Born to You ... a Savior*, we embrace the Christmas joy and wonder of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

At Christ's birth, God the Father did a new and everlasting thing in our lives: He gave us His one and only Son for our redemption. In divine humility, Jesus joined us as a human being. Born of a woman, bearing the sins of the world, Jesus comes to us as our Protector, our Deliverer, our Savior.

“The Quiet and Wonder of Advent”

How noisy is the world in which you live?

Some people like a lot of noise. During the summer when our windows are open, we can hear trains as they pass through the area. We also hear cars as they come down the street - actually, we don't hear the car - we hear the music playing in the car even when they're still a block away. How come? Because the radio is blasting so loud! I always wonder if the driver of the car will have much hearing left by the time they are my age.

In our noisy world, is there any room for quiet?

In our practical, scientific world, is there any room for mystery and wonder?

It is interesting that scientists seem to find plenty to wonder about both in the universe and in human behavior.

Is it foolishness to wonder what God had, or has, in mind for you and me? After all, no one can fathom the depths of God's full intent for us. However, the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden portrays what our world should be a place of beauty and peace. We know how sin destroyed what God had so perfectly made. Life on earth became unraveled. Like a ball of yarn, played with by a child, it soon lay tangled on the floor. Life's vast potential for achievement and for joy was lost amidst the twisted strands; the beautiful garden only a memory.



As a result, our Creator saw that something needed to be done. As the One who originally brought order out of chaos at creation, God set about to do it again. This time, instead of a “*spoken word*”, “*THE Word*” would enter into our tangled, hurting, chaotic world in human flesh.

The quiet and wonder of Advent is set right in the midst of one of our culture's noisiest seasons. In the midst of the chaos of December comes the reminder that . . . He is coming . . . The Prince of Peace. He calls us to prepare a bed . . . soft, undefiled, within our heart where the quiet and wonder of the Baby Jesus can bring peace, hope and joy.

God's love for sinners - for you and me - is certainly a wonder. The salvation He gives us brings to our life the quiet assurance that with His coming our foes of sin, death, and Satan are silenced.

May you know the quiet and wonder of the season and may your heart and life be richly touched this Advent and Christmas.

Blessings in the name of our coming Savior, Jesus!

Pastor Koeppen

PS - Join us on Sunday, December 14th at 10:00am at the downtown church in Kankakee as we finish the 165th Anniversary year for St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School. Rev. Allan Buss, the Northern Illinois District President, will be preaching for us that weekend! Please respond to the RSVP so we know how many to plan for in our worship service as well as the reception.



Meaningless? Meaningless?

What “does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil - this is the gift of God. Ecclesiastes 3:9-13

The New Year is usually a time for reflection. A time to think about all the events and memories of the past year and also make some plans and look forward to the coming year. The book of Ecclesiastes is a great book to read through at this time of year. Ecclesiastes helps keep everything in perspective.

Solomon, one of the wisest men who has ever lived, wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. This book is a collection of his thoughts and musings as he looks back on life and asks heart-wrenching questions. Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? Where does God fit into all of this?

To be honest, the book of Ecclesiastes is not an uplifting book. It paints an honest picture of life and how meaningless it sometimes seems. Over and over again, Solomon writes, *“Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”* As the years come and go, so many of the things that are so important to us at one time or another also come and go. And ultimately, all human beings face the same ending . . . death.

As I think of the state of this world - all the wars, all the unrest, all the poverty, all the cancer and sickness, all the abuse, all the evil - it can be so easy to feel like there is no meaning in this world. I have seen good people die while others keep on living? And why?

The main point of Ecclesiastes is that we cannot understand and give meaning to all the events that happen in this world. To us, many things appear meaningless. *Without God and the perspective He gives us in the Bible, there is very little meaning in this world.*

Solomon concludes that, *“[God] has made everything beautiful in its time.”* We don't always understand how God does this, but we trust that God is at work redeeming and renewing his creation. We just celebrated how God has sent his own Son into this world. Into the midst of the darkness and despair, God took flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus Christ redeemed this world by offering his life in place of ours. Jesus died so that all who believe in him will receive life - life while here on earth and eternal life with God in heaven. God came to us to save us and to give us hope.

Solomon also shares this wisdom with us, *“[God] has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”* One of the

greatest mysteries is that God has placed his image within us, a soul that will last for all eternity. God created us to have a relationship with him and to live with him forever. The truth is, we cannot understand why events happen the way they do. But we can always know that God is with us. Even in the midst of our good times and in our tragedies, we know that God is at work in our lives.

When I take the time to stop for a moment, it is so easy for me to see God at work at St. Paul's - at our Day School, in our Sunday School, in our mission projects, in our outreach, in our fellowship, and in our worship services. I see God touching lives through all of you as you reach out to those in need. I see a God who has a great future for His Church at St. Paul's. I know that God will continue to do amazing things through people like you and me who place their trust in Him.

I pray that this New Year is one that you experience God working in marvelous ways in your life. May the Lord open your hearts and your eyes to his hand at work in the midst of your life!

God's Blessings to you in this NEW year!!!!

Pastor Koeppen



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Every year as Christmas approaches, we hear again the familiar words: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”* (John 1:14) We know them well, yet they strike us differently depending on the season we’re living through. This year, many of us have felt the weight of perseverance—pressing on through long seasons of strain, uncertainty, and weariness. In sermons these past months, we’ve talked often about what it means to persevere: not in our own strength, but in the strength Christ provides.

Christmas, then, comes not as a sentimental distraction from hardship but as God’s answer within it.

- The Child in the manger is not simply a symbol of hope; **He is Hope Himself**—God taking on our flesh so He can carry what we cannot. Christ does not call us to endure from a distance; He steps into the very world that exhausts us. He knows what it is to be burdened, to be pressed, to walk the long road of obedience. And because He has taken on our weakness, He promises to be our strength.
- When endurance feels like shoveling your driveway through deep snow, when faithfulness feels costly, when waiting feels endless, Christmas proclaims that God has drawn near. The Savior who cried in a manger would one day cry out from the cross, bearing every sin, every sorrow, every strain we carry now. And the risen Christ continues to speak into weary hearts: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

So take heart this Christmas. The One who came in the quiet of Bethlehem still comes to you now—through His Word, in His Sacraments, and by His Spirit—to steady your steps and strengthen your faith. He is with you in every season of endurance, and He will see you through.

Take time this season to be intentionally with the Lord—whether through our children’s Christmas program, our Sunday divine services, our Advent midweek gatherings, or our



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship. In all of these moments, the Lord meets you to refresh, refill, and strengthen you in the midst of a tiring holiday season.

May the peace of Christ, who entered our world to redeem it, guard your hearts and sustain you in hope this Christmas and always.

In Christ,
Pastor Drinnon

A Simple Advent Wreath for Your Home

As the days grow shorter and the pace of the season grows faster, Advent invites us to slow down, breathe, and remember why we prepare for Christmas in the first place. One simple but meaningful way to do this is by using an Advent wreath at home. This small practice can help families, couples, and individuals pause each week to reflect on Christ’s coming and rest in His promises.



You don’t need anything elaborate. Four candles—three purple and one pink—are enough, with simple greenery if you choose. Each week of Advent, light the appropriate candle(s), read the Scripture passage, and offer a short prayer. These small moments become touchpoints of hope, peace, joy, and love in the midst of a busy season.

Week 1 – Hope Candle

Light: 1 purple candle

Read: Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

Focus: Christ is the promised Light who shines into our darkness.

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, bring hope into our hearts as we wait for Your coming. Amen.”

Week 2 – Peace Candle

Light: 2 purple candles

Read: Micah 5:2–5a

Focus: God brings peace in unexpected places—even Bethlehem.

Prayer: “Prince of Peace, calm our hearts and help us rest in Your promises. Amen.”

Week 3 – Joy Candle

Light: 2 purple candles + the pink candle

Read: Luke 2:8–14

Focus: The angels announce joy for all people—including us today.

Prayer: “Lord of joy, fill us with the gladness of the shepherds. Amen.”

Week 4 – Love Candle

Light: 3 purple candles + the pink candle

Read: John 1:1–5, 14

Focus: God’s love takes on flesh in Jesus, who dwells with us.

Prayer: “God of love, teach us to reflect Christ’s love to one another. Amen.”

Christmas Day – Christ Candle

If you have a white Christ Candle, place it in the center and light it along with the others.

Read: Luke 2:1–20 or John 1:1–14

Focus: The wait is over—Christ is born for us.

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, Light of the world, dwell in our homes and hearts now and always. Amen.”

As you gather around your wreath this Advent, may these brief times of Scripture and prayer become places of rest for your soul. In every candle lit and every promise heard, may Christ draw near to you with His hope, peace, joy, and love.



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The Sunday School Christmas Program will be **December 21st at 4:00 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 13th and 20th**, we will meet at the downtown church for practice **from 9 am to 11 am.** December 13th will be for 1st graders and up. December 20th will be for all children participating in the program, including preschoolers and kindergartners.



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 (**December 7th & 21st**) in the upper grade hallway.



YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY RESCHEDULED

Due to multiple conflicts at St. Paul’s and in our community, the Youth Ministry Christmas Party has been rescheduled for **Friday, December 19th from 5-8pm.** All youth in grades 7th - 12th are invited to join us for food, cookie decorating, Christmas fun, and a white elephant gift exchange. College students home for break are welcome to join us as well! Please bring a wrapped goofy white elephant gift (valued \$10 or less) for the gift exchange.





YOUTH...SAVE THESE DATES!

Youth Nights (6-8pm):
Sun., January 11th & 25th
Sun., February 22nd
Sun., March 8th & 29th
Sun., April 19th

CUC Lock-In (7pm - 7am):
Fri., February 6th

CALLING ALL YOUTH!

Your help is needed with our Annual Christmas Cookie Sale!



~ Group Bake Days - It's Cookie Baking time! We have scheduled bake days at the Turtle Acres Kitchen (thanks Mrs. Cherry!) between November 30th and December 19th.

~ Bake at Home - Last year we sold 450 dozen cookies! It takes many ovens to bake that many! We are asking every youth to bake at least 4 dozen cookies at home.

~ Cookie Packing & Sale - Saturday, December 20th is the BIG COOKIE DAY! Join us at 8am in the school gym to pack the cookie boxes. We need all hands on deck – both youth and parents! At 10am, the doors will open for pre-order pick-up and on-site sales. We also will have a pick-up opportunity from 4:30 to 5:15 pm at the downtown church and again on Sunday morning at school during coffee hour.

Please use this QR code to sign up for all of these opportunities:



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 7th 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. 6th 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 will meet again on **Saturday, December 20th & Saturday, January 24th at 7:30 am** in the Riverside Hospital Cafeteria. Join us as we study God's Word over breakfast and coffee.



"ROAD TO CORONATION"

"Road to Coronation" takes you on a journey beside Jesus on His walk to the cross, examining the distinct passion narrative in each of the four Gospels. What emerges is a vivid encounter with a King who lived solely to serve rather than to be served, all the while challenging and confounding the spiritual authorities of His day. Call Pastor Dave Bottorff, the leader for this Bible study, at 815-304-4553 to come to this Bible study at his home on **Tuesday, January 27th.**

NEW BIBLE STUDY SERIES!

Join us this Epiphany season for a new six-week Bible Study, **beginning Sunday, January 11th at 9:45 a.m.,** as we explore the parables of Jesus found throughout the Gospels. Each week, we'll take a closer look at one of Jesus' parables—unpacking its meaning, discussing its context, and discovering how these timeless stories continue to shape our faith and daily life.

Whether you're a longtime student of Scripture or just beginning to dig deeper, this study will offer rich conversation, thoughtful insight, and encouragement from God's Word. We hope you'll join us!



TRIVIA NIGHT

Save the date for an Olympic Night Out at the 2026 Trivia Night on **Friday March 13th at 6pm** in the school gym. This evening of fun supports St. Paul's Youth Ministry programs including the 2028 LCMS Youth Gathering in San Antonio, TX.

“PETER’S JOYFUL PERSEVERANCE”

The Tuesday morning Bible class taught by Roy Cordes is taking a Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year’s break and will not be meeting again until **Tuesday, January 6th at 9:45 am** in Fellowship Hall at the downtown church. We are in the middle of II Peter, the letter Peter wrote to new Christians and converted Jews who had dispersed away from Rome due to persecutions by Nero and the Roman government.

In I Peter, the emphasis was on joyful perseverance to help their faith grow strong due to surviving trials and tests. II Peter, written by Peter when he was in jail and awaiting crucifixion, covers living with virtuous qualities to demonstrate our faith and warnings against false teachers in the last days.

In January, we will be finishing II Peter, Chapters 1-3 and the class will continue to meet weekly until the last week in April. Peter’s letters are classified as General Epistles meant for a number of churches, including those today, unlike Paul’s letters that were written for specific locations. Peter’s primary message in II Peter in addition to the Gospel, were informing his readers that the grace of God in Christ truly transforms and empowers Christians to live righteously in the face of opposition. His conclusion is that it results in fruitful lives,

and readers by God’s grace will live a life that is pleasing to God.

Please consider starting your New Year with a re-dedication to studying God’s Word every day and attend a Bible class or two with your fellow Christians. Studying the Bible in a group once a W-E-E-K makes the devil W-E-A-K in your life!

ADVENT DINNERS

Our midweek Advent services begin on Wednesday, December 3rd 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:

~ **December 3rd**-Human Care

BBQ Sandwiches

~ **December 10th**-Parish Ed/Deb Turrell’s

Small Group

Homemade Soup & Sandwiches

~ **December 17th** - Parish Fellowship

Lasagna, Salad, Garlic Bread

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 p.m.



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 2026!** 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. The other three months they help bring another part of the dinner (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 24, February 21, March 21 and April 18** (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 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 16th at Hoppy Pig**. Everyone is welcome! Call Nancy Eden at 248-842-2837 to RSVP.

MATCHING FUNDS CHALLENGE

The Lord has truly blessed St. Paul's Lutheran Church. He blessed us with a donor that put a Matching Funds challenge before us. The Lord has blessed us with many people who have embraced this challenge.

The congregation was challenged to donate \$50,000 for the General Fund and \$50,000 for the Building Fund. Offerings given as of November 16th are \$44,218.12 to the General Fund and \$56,082.15 to the Building Fund. We need to raise \$5,781.88 for the General Fund to complete the challenge. Can you please make a donation to fulfill the challenge by Christmas?

Please check the bulletin and the thermometers at church and school for new totals.



LWML TEA PARTY

The Ladies of St. Paul's are invited to join us to grow in God's grace on **Sunday, February 1st from 2 to 4pm** in the Fellowship Hall at the Kankakee campus for our 3rd Annual Lutheran Women in Mission Tea. Bring your mothers, daughters, and friends for tea, refreshments, fellowship, and a mission project. Watch your mailbox for an invitation with more details coming soon.

PHIL'S FRIENDS - KANKAKEE

HOPE CENTER UPDATE

Our team at the Kankakee Hope Center is continuing to work steadily, and we are excited to share that we are on track to complete **700 care packages** in 2025! These packages bring Christ-centered hope and encouragement to those facing cancer.

As you plan your Christmas shopping, we ask that you consider picking up an item or two for Phil's Friends. This ministry is donor run and we thank you for your continued support, generosity, prayers, and partnership. We look forward to all that God will do through this ministry in 2026!

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES



Crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, bathroom equipment, etc. are available to borrow from our medical assistance room in the Ministry & Mission Center. We now have a motorized wheelchair as well. If you need to borrow something, call Christie in the church office (815-932-0312) or call Roy Cordes (815-592-2647) to make arrangements. There is no charge and no deadline on returning borrowed items. You do not have to be a member. If you have a friend who needs something, invite them to use the donations we have received from others. *We do not have any canes, so please call if you have any to donate.*



PTL'S ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE!! PTL will be hosting St. Paul's Lutheran School's *Boots & Blessings* Annual Gala on **Saturday, February 28th** at Quality Inn in Bradley. Join us for an evening of dinner and live music (provided by South Side Social Club)! 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.

Our silent auction will be exclusively online again. It will open a week before the event and close at the end of the event. If you work for or own a business that would be willing to sponsor the event or donate a basket, service, or experience, please call the school office for the proper paperwork. 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. If you have a talent to share, we would also love

to get some great handmade products for the auction! Our goal is to raise \$40,000. All proceeds from the event will be used to provide teaching supplies for our teachers, iPads and chromebooks for the lower grades, laptops for our teachers, and additional security measures for our school. Tickets will go on sale in early December so watch the weekly emails and printed announcements for your chance to purchase tickets using our early bird discount! Thank you for your support!

BRADLEY CHRISTMAS PARADE



On **Friday, December 5th**, the Village of Bradley will present their annual lighted Christmas parade. This year's theme is "A Christmas Jubilee on Gingerbread Lane" and St. Paul's PTL is entering

a float! We would love to have you walk with us alongside the float. If you are interested, please call the church office. 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 9th at 6:00 pm. Then on Friday, December 12th, the Kindergarten through 8th graders will sing at 6:30 pm.**

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

January 6th 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 20th. We have been blessed with increasing enrollment over the years so don't delay.

SHOP WITH SCRP (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, such as L.L. Bean, Bath & Body Works, Dave & Buster's, Under Armour, Old Navy, American Eagle, Carter's, Kendra Scott, Royal Caribbean, Texas Roadhouse, Cracker Barrel, Macy's, Panera, Cinemark, Buffalo Wild Wings, hotels.com, Lowe's, Sephora, Marshall's, and so many more!

Call or text Julie Dummer at 815-530-7320 or download the RaiseRight app to *place your order by 9am on December 8th* 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.



VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MEETING

A regular meeting of the Voters' Assembly will be held on **Sunday, January 25th 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 24-month period, a member may be 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 2026 has been posted at the downtown church and will remain there until January 3rd, when it will be moved to the school site. 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 write your phone number next to your name.

The cost is \$25.00 per vase. 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 815-592-5701 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	1798
Communicant	1325
Communing	447
Attendance Avg. Weekend Worship (as of the end of the month):	
Month	275
Year-to-date	267

FISCAL YEAR-TO-DATE

FINANCES

(Through 11/16/25)

General Fund

Receipts (Envelopes, Plate, Sunday
School, School Ops, Electronic):
\$262,958.91
Budgeted Amount: \$320,384.60
% of Need: 82.08%

Building Fund

Receipts(Envelopes+Electronic):
\$39,450.00
Budgeted Amount: \$67,307.60
% of need: 58.61%

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Communion is celebrated the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month</p> 	<p>1 7:00pm Lay Ministry Meeting (B)</p> 	<p>2 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation (B)</p> 	<p>3 5:30pm Advent Dinner (D) 7:00pm Worship (D)</p> 	<p>4 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk-In (D)</p> 	<p>5 6:30pm Bradley Christmas Parade (Broadway)</p> 	<p>6 9:00am Phil's Friends Work Day (D) 9:00am Worship Band Practice (B) 5:00pm Worship (D)</p> 
<p>7 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B)</p>	<p>8 DEADLINE TO ORDER RAISE RIGHT GIFT CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS</p> 	<p>9 6:00pm Preschool Christmas Program (B) 6:30pm School Board Meeting (B)</p> 	<p>10 9:30am Patriarchs (D) 5:30pm Advent Dinner (D) 7:00pm Worship (D)</p> 	<p>11 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk-In (D)</p> 	<p>12 6:30pm K-8th Christmas Concert (B)</p> 	<p>13 9:00am SS Christmas Practice (D) 3:00pm Alumni Tour (KTA) 4:00pm Alumni Tour (B) 5:00pm Alumni Dinner (B)</p> 
<p>14 10:00am Combined Anniversary Worship Service (D) 11:30am Anniversary Reception (D)</p> 	<p>15 7:00pm Church Council (B)</p> 	<p>16 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation (B)</p> 	<p>17 5:30pm Advent Dinner (D) 7:00pm Worship (D)</p> 	<p>18 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk-In (D)</p> 	<p>19 EARLY DISMISSAL 11:15 / 11:30 am 5:00pm Youth Christmas Party & Cookie Decorating (B)</p> 	<p>20 7:30am Men's Bible Breakfast (Riverside) 9:00am SS Christmas Practice (D) 9:30am Phil's Friends Pack Party (D) 10:00am Christmas Cookie Sale (B) 4:30pm Christmas Cookie Sale (D) 5:00pm Worship (D)</p>
<p>21 8:30am Worship (B)</p>  <p>9:00am Christmas Cookie Sale (B)</p> <p>9:45am Youth Bible Study (B)</p> <p>9:45am Children's Sunday School (B)</p> <p>11:05am Worship (B)</p> <p>4:00pm SS Christmas Program (D)</p>	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Eve	26	27
CHRISTMAS BREAK						
			OFFICE CLOSED 5:00pm Candlelight Service (D) 7:00pm Candlelight Service (D) 10:00pm Candlelight Service (D)	OFFICE CLOSED 10:00am Christmas Worship (D)		5:00pm Worship (D)
						
<p>28 8:30am Worship (B) 11:05am Worship (B)</p>	<p>29 9:00am Phil's Friends Special Work Day (D) 9:00am Poinsettia Pick-Up (D)</p> 	30	31 New Years Eve			
		CHRISTMAS BREAK	OFFICE CLOSED 6:00pm New Years Eve Worship (D)			



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Communion is celebrated the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month 	1	2	3
				CHRISTMAS BREAK		5:00pm Worship (D)
4 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B)	5 CHRISTMAS BREAK 7:00pm Lay Ministry Meeting (B) 	6 Re-Enrollment Opens 9:45am Peter's Joyful Perseverance (D) 	7	OFFICE CLOSED 1:00pm Phil's Friends Special Work Day (D) 		
				8 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk In (D) 	9	10 9:00am Phil's Friends Work Day (D) 5:00pm Worship (D)
11 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)	12	13 Enrollment for Siblings & Church Members Opens 9:45am Peter's Joyful Perseverance (D) 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation Class (B) 6:30pm School Board Meeting (B)	14 9:30am Patriarchs (D)	15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk In (D) 	16 EARLY DISMISSAL 11:15 / 11:30 am 6:00pm Fellowship Dinner (Hoppy Pig) 	17 5:00pm Worship (D)
		20 Enrollment for New Families Opens 9:45am Peter's Joyful Perseverance (D)		22 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk In (D) 	23	
18 8:30am Worship (B) 9:45am Youth & Adult Bible Study (B) 9:45am Children's Sunday School (B) 11:05am Worship (B)	19 MLK Jr. Day - NO SCHOOL 7:00pm Church Council Meeting (B) 		21	22 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk In (D) 	23	24 7:30am Men's Bible Breakfast (Riverside) 9:30am Phil's Friends Pack Party (D) 5:00pm Worship (D) 6:00pm Tables of Eight
25 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) 6:00 pm Youth Night (B)	26	LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK				31 5:00pm Worship (D) 6:00pm Daddy Daughter Dance (B)
		27 9:45am Peter's Joyful Perseverance (D) 4:00pm Jr. Confirmation Class (B) 7:00pm Road to Coronation (1573 Surrey, Bourb)	28 9:30am Patriarchs (D)	29 6:00pm Phil's Friends Walk In (D) 	30	



Serving our Lord in December

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

Wed., December 3	7:00 pm	Dain & Dylan Blair
Sun., December 7	8:30 am 11:05 am	Hudson Bade, Nolan Freitas Emma Davis, Ty Luhman
Wed., December 10	7:00 pm	Kenzie Norton, Quinn Styck
Sun., December 14	10:00 am	Layna Rahn, Claire Wilson
Wed., December 17	7:00 pm	Lana McHugh, George Morocho Loja
Sun., December 21	8:30 am 11:05 am	Olivia Reardanz, Quinn Styck Annie Schneider, Beth Schreurs
Wed., December 24	5:00 pm 7:00 pm 10:00 pm	Brody Brinkmann (crossbearer), Kaden McDonald, Zach Porter J.P. Woods (crossbearer), Norah Callan, Luke Stirnaman Jacob Kubal (crossbearer), Kenzie Norton, Layna Rahn
Thurs., December 25	10:00 am	Nolan LaVoie (crossbearer), Emma Davis, Lana McHugh
Sun., December 28	8:30 am 11:05 am	Hudson Bade, Ty Luhman Dylan Nordmeyer, Lucas Porter
Wed., December 31	6:00 pm	Dain & Dylan Blair

LAY READERS SCHEDULE

Sat., Dec. 6 Sun., Dec. 7	5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am	Rich Nordmeyer Bill Balgeman Karen Beatty	Sun., Dec. 14	10:00 am	No reader
Sat., Dec. 20 Sun., Dec. 21	5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am	Audra Taylor Lauren Lundmark Deb Turrell	Sat., Dec. 27 Sun., Dec. 28	5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am	Ken Ebert Loree Yoakum Melody Trudeau

TRUSTEE SCHEDULES

ADVENT SERVICES Wed., Dec. 3 - Mike Callan Wed., Dec. 10 - Jeff Johnson Wed., Dec. 17 - Rob Wood	Sat. & Sun., December 6 & 7 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Barry Gadbois 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler	Sun., December 14 (Downtown) 10:00 am - Mike Callan
Sat. & Sun., December 20 & 21 5:00 pm - Mike Callan 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau	CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 7:00 pm - Rob Wood 10:00 pm - Ken Capps	CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE 10:00 am - Terry Treece
Sat. & Sun., December 27 & 28 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Mike Regas 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau	NEW YEARS EVE SERVICE 6:00 pm - Mike Callan	



Serving our Lord in January

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE					
Sun., January 4	8:30 am 11:05 am	George Morocho Loja, Mason Raloff Maddie Billingsley, Norah Callan			
Sun., January 11	8:30 am 11:05 am	Brody Brinkmann, Mo Macari Luke Stirnaman, Claire Wilson			
Sun., January 18	8:30 am 11:05 am	Micah Lundmark, Lucas Porter Jacob Kubal, Kaden McDonald			
Sun., January 25	8:30 am 11:05 am	Nolan Freitas, Ryleigh Reiniche Dylan Nordmeyer, Zach Porter			
LAY READERS SCHEDULE					
Sat., January 3 Sun., January 4	5:00 pm 8:30 am 10:00 am	Jennifer Richardson JoAnn Hess Deb Turrell	Sat., January 10 Sun., January 11	5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am	Diane Barber Bill Balgeman Karen Beatty
Sat., January 17 Sun., January 18	5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am	Rich Engel Mark Hess Sharla Ronchetto	Sat., January 24 Sun., January 25	5:00 pm 8:30 am 11:05 am	Audra Taylor Lauren Lundmark Josh Cherry
Sat., January 31	5:00 pm	Pat Hatch			
TRUSTEE SCHEDULE					
Sat & Sun., January 3 & 4 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Barry Gadbois 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler		Sat & Sun., January 10 & 11 5:00 pm - Jeff Johnson 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau		Sat. & Sun., January 17 & 18 5:00 pm - Mike Callan 8:30 am - Mike Regas 11:05 am - Greg Wheeler	
Sat & Sun, January 24 & 25 5:00 pm - Rob Wood 8:30 am - Tom Stirnaman 11:05 am - Jim Trudeau					



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 2nd**. 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 Thursday, December 25th.
- _____ I will pick up my poinsettia(s) at 9:00 am on Monday, December 29th 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: _____

ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND

The BIG day is just around the corner! On December 14th we will celebrate God's faithfulness to St. Paul's with a combined worship service at 10 am at our historic downtown church. (Please note there will NO Saturday service that weekend.)

Hopefully you received your printed invitation in the mail this past week. It has all of the information for the weekend, including a special alumni event on Saturday, December 13th. If you did not receive an invitation, please reach out to the church office.

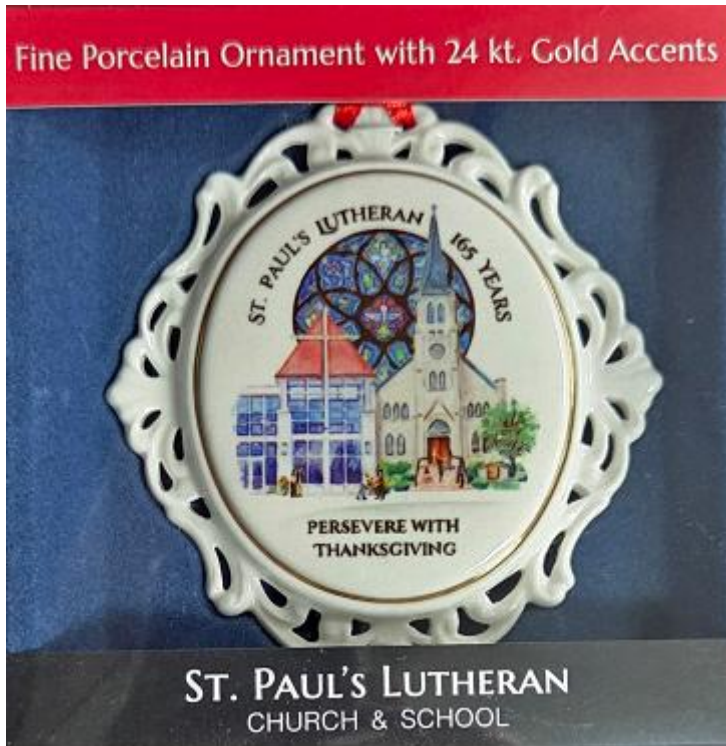
We ask that you please use the QR code in the invitation to let us know you are planning to attend any or all of the weekend festivities. The sign-up link is also available on our website stpaulslutheran.net or feel free to call the church office at 815-932-0312 to RSVP.

It is going to be a glorious day, praising the Lord for all of His gifts and His grace and mercy to St. Paul's for the last 165 years!! Something to consider....St. Paul's began in 1859, 16 months before the Civil War!! God has seen our congregation through so many ups and downs, all so that His precious Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ would be, and continues to be, shared with those around us—our families, our communities and the world!

There will be a reception and light lunch following the worship service, allowing time for fellowship and catching up with alumni (both students and staff) and former members who will be joining us. At that time, you will be able to view highlights from our historical timeline, Confirmation pictures from throughout the years, and old pictorial directories and yearbooks. In addition, the former school on Dearborn, which has been newly renamed St. Paul's Mission and Ministry Center will be open for tours. This is now home to an official Phil's Friends Center of Hope.

You won't want to miss this amazing time together!! So, mark your calendar, plan to attend, and please let us know your intentions to join us on December 13th and 14th!!

165th Anniversary Chairman,
Nancy Eden



St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School

**165th Anniversary
Commemorative
Christmas Ornament**

\$25 per ornament

These special anniversary ornaments will make a beautiful gift for yourself and/or someone else this Christmas! Be sure to get one or more as a keepsake of the 165th Anniversary of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and the 160th Anniversary of St. Paul's Lutheran School! Ornaments will be sold after the worship service on Saturdays and between the worship services on Sundays.

You may pay with cash or check (payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church).

ST. PAUL'S YOUTH MINISTRY

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE

Sat, Dec. 20th & Sun, Dec. 21st

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. A new smaller gifting box of 1 dozen cookies is available for \$10. 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

Order & Pay Online Here:

OR



Complete this form and place it in the collection plate or return it to the church office with payment by Sunday, December 14th

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Large 2 dozen Cookie Boxes _____ x \$15 per box

Small 1 dozen Cookie Boxes _____ x \$10 per box

Total Due _____

☐ Cash ☐ Check # _____ (payable to St. Paul's Youth)

☐ Credit Card (via Square)

I will pick up my pre-packed assorted box(es):

☐ Sat, Dec. 20th, 10 am - 12 pm at the Bourbonnais campus

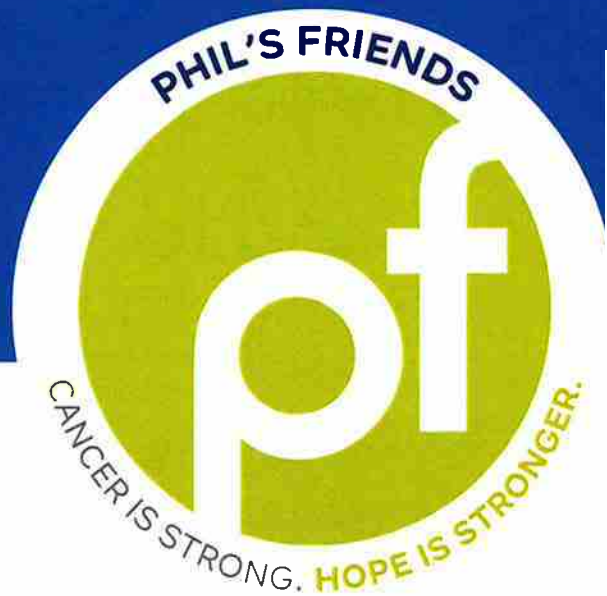
☐ Sat, Dec. 20th, 4:30 pm - 5:15 pm at the Kankakee campus

☐ Sun, Dec. 21st, 9 am - 11 am at the Bourbonnais campus

☐ Please deliver to a shut-in or community organization

Please avoid the following allergens in my box:

☐ Peanuts ☐ Tree Nuts ☐ Other _____



KANKAKEE HOPE CENTER



DEC/JAN



Phil's Friends is a non-profit organization that distributes **FREE** care packages and monthly Cards of Hope to cancer patients of all ages across the country. We deliver up to **300 Care Packages per week** and mail **over 9,000 Cards of Hope** each month.

As diagnoses increase and awareness of the Phil's Friends mission grows, we anticipate a continued rise in demand. The **Kankakee Hope Center** is a crucial part of this mission.

Join us in spreading hope by creating boxes, cards, and blankets or join us for a Pack Party where we assemble care packages.

The Kankakee Hope Center has **Volunteer Walk-in Hours** happen **every Thursday from 6pm to 8pm** (except Thanksgiving and Christmas) and **one Saturday a month**, called a Work Day.

One Saturday a month is the **Pack Party** where a large number of care packages are prepared and shipped.

See the calendar for dates and times.

Kankakee Hope Center

240 S Dearborn Ave., Kankakee, IL 60901

Use the **blue door** under the Phil's Friends sign

For more information contact Sarah Cherry
sarahc@philsfriends.org (815) 651-6864

THURS, DEC 4

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm

SAT, DEC 6

Saturday Work Day - 9am to Noon

THURS, DEC 11

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm

THURS, DEC 18

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm

SAT, DEC 20

December Pack Party - 9:30 to 11 am

MON, DEC 29

Special Work Day - 9am to Noon

THURS, JAN 1

Special Work Day - 1pm to 4pm

THURS, JAN 8

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm

SAT, JAN 10

Saturday Work Day - 9am to Noon

THURS, JAN 15

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm

THURS, JAN 22

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm

SAT, JAN 24

January Pack Party - 9:30 to 11am

THURS, JAN 29

Walk-in Opportunity - 6pm to 8pm



phil's friends

cancer is strong. **hope is stronger.**

As diagnoses increase and awareness of the Phil's Friends mission grows, we anticipate a continued rise in demand.

Please help so no one is turned away!

Gather items or order from our **Amazon Wishlist**. Collect items on your own, with your neighborhood, church, or business organization and bring them to one of our Hope Centers or ship to our **Crown Point location**.

CARE PACKAGE NEEDS

BLANKETS

Throw blankets, crocheted, or fleece tied



HATS

Knitted & Crocheted



FUZZY SOCKS

Women's Only



TISSUES



LIP BALMS

JOURNALS

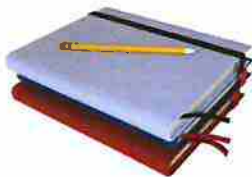
PUZZLE BOOKS

LOTIONS

MOUTH RINSE

TOOTHBRUSH

& Travel size
TOOTHPASTE



Fragrance-free; 16oz. or smaller



Alcohol-free
4-8oz. or smaller



PLAYING CARDS

No Casino Decks



GIFT CARDS *

\$20 value or higher



MONETARY GIFTS



SCAN QR CODES AMAZON LIST PF WEBSITE



Please note: all items need to be new and unused because our friends with cancer have compromised immune systems.
** Gift Cards are used to purchase needed items. We do not put them in the care packages

DROP OFF LOCATIONS

CALL OR EMAIL FOR HOURS

julied@philsfriends.org 224-653-8315

Crown Point, IN
1249 Arrowhead Ct.
Crown Point, IN 46307

Wheaton, IL
213 W. Wesley St.
Wheaton, IL 60187-5135

Addison, IL
1150 N. Swift Rd.
Addison, IL 60101-1452

PREPARE YE

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR *Advent*



WEEK 1: *Ponder*



WEEK 2: *Pray*



WEEK 3: *Praise*

PREPARE YE!!

In this worship series for Advent, we contemplate the many ways we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas, taking cues from the psalms of old and from those whom God chose to play a part in the story of our Lord's birth. As we draw near to the manger bed of our Savior from sin and death, our hearts prepare Him room for His everlasting love. Let us Ponder, Pray, and Praise God, for the great gift of His Son, Jesus!

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 - 12/3, 10, 17 - 7:00pm - Church Campus

Wednesday, 12/24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

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

Thursday, 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

#### **Wednesday, 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