

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

Aug / Sept
2026



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

#changinglives

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 Bible Class:

Sunday 9:45 am @ the School
(beginning again after Labor Day weekend)

Youth Bible Class & Children's Sunday School:

(beginning again after Labor Day weekend)

Sunday 9:45 am @ the School
Classes for Pre-K through 12th grade

Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
(through August 7th)

8:00 am. - 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
(beginning August 10th)

Church & School Office: 815-932-0312

Church Website: www.stpaulslutheran.net



Next Newsletter Deadline Sept 15th

SPECIAL DATES

- Final Registration Day - August 18
- School Open House - August 18
- First Day of School - August 20
- Church Picnic - August 30
- Labor Day - September 7
- Patriot Day - September 11
- Grandparents Day - September 13
- First Day of Fall - September 22



A Voters' Assembly Meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 27th at 12:30 pm** at the school. 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 24 months, a member may be accepted into voting membership.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will kick-off on **Sunday, September 13th**. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

SAVE THE DATE

FOR OUR CHURCH PICNIC!!

On Sunday, August 30th we will have a single worship service to celebrate the beginning of a new school year. **The service will be at 10:00 am** under a tent in front of the school. Following the service, we will celebrate with a church picnic! There will be seating inside and out for the meal and fun activities. We hope your family will plan to stay a while after dinner to enjoy some of the games and activities or just to visit with fellow members and friends! Mr. Porter will grill hamburgers and hotdogs and we ask everyone to bring a dish or two to share.

A link to a Sign Up Genius can be found on the St. Paul's website and Facebook pages. Please **RSVP by August 23rd** so that we know how many people to expect for the picnic. And of course you are welcome to attend the service without an RSVP! We hope all church & school families, along with alumni, will join us to celebrate God's many blessings on our church & school and enjoy worship, good food, fun and fellowship! Second graders will also be receiving their Bibles at this service.

Keep It Simple

“Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)”

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

Summer is rounding the last corner and I wonder if there isn't something we can learn from summertime and apply to our lives.

Have you ever heard of Rube Goldberg? He was a cartoonist remembered for his humorous drawings of fantastically complicated machines that performed enormously simple tasks. In the spirit of Mr. Goldberg, an annual contest is held to design a machine that performs an easy task in the most wildly inefficient manner.

In 1998, the competition was won by a group of engineering students from the University of Texas. They designed a contraption that required 40 separate steps (that's right 40 steps) to shut off a beeping alarm clock.

In the Austin American-Statesman, Dick Stanley wrote an article describing their winning device which utilized ***“a bubbling water tower, pushing up a float to trip a lever that made a rat trap whack a twirling weight”*** you get the idea.

The reason I was thinking about this during the summer is that summertime is a time in which things get a little simpler, don't they? I know it does around the church office! The school is quieter and the days are less hectic.

So, I was thinking that we tend to be a little Rube Goldbergian in our pursuit of life and happiness, don't we? We go through complicated gyrations of acquiring things - to help us feel better about how we look - so that others will have a positive opinion of us - so they can reinforce our sense that we're on the right track - to achieve our goals - so that we can And it all becomes very complicated.

The words of Jesus from the gospel of Matthew come to us as a simple and refreshing alternative to our tangled efforts to find security and success. In Matthew 6, the Lord said emphatically, ***“Don't worry about your life (vs25),” “Don't worry about clothes (vs28),” “Don't worry about food (vs31),” “Don't worry about tomorrow (vs34).”***



WHY?

“Because your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. (vs32).”

Instead, ***“Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)”***

So . . . What worries are paralyzing you? Would you describe your life as simple or complicated? Set your worries before the Lord and ask for patience, a calm spirit, and for simplicity in life.

Let this month be a bridge to next month. Take the simpleness of summer and try to set that as a standard for the year in all other areas of your life. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ invites us to follow Him, trust Him, and keep it simple.

Blessings in Him!

Pastor Karl Koeppen



Stewards Engaged in God's Work

Last year, we explored God’s desire that we give back to Him freely and generously. We considered the tithe and how we can give back to God with proportionate first-fruit giving.

This year, we will have the wonderful opportunity to consider what it means to be **Stewards Engaged in God's Work**. Christian stewardship puts our faith into action, and it involves the management of our lives and resources for God's purposes. The ultimate purpose of our stewardship is to help *“all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4)*. As stewards, we are God's instruments through whom He works. We are His hands, feet, and mouth to the world.

The theme for week one is **“Stewards Engaged in Sharing the Gospel.”**

Just before Jesus' ascension into heaven, He instructed His disciples: *“Go therefore and make disciples...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20)*. Jesus commanded His disciples along with us to go spread the life-saving Gospel throughout all nations. God's love overflowing from within us provides the motivation and power to share the life-saving Gospel with all people. He works through us to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

In week two, the theme is **“Stewards Engaged in Serving.”**

Faithful stewardship demonstrates our love, devotion, and submission to Jesus. Our stewardship is motivated by God's love. Through faith, we can love our neighbors as our brothers and sisters in Christ. We see others as God's children who, like us, are lost and hopeless without Jesus. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to use our lives and blessings in service for others.

The theme for week three is **“Stewards Engaged in Faithful Giving.”**

God calls us to steward our financial gifts according to His will and plan. God not only provides for our needs; He invites us to use our financial resources to assist those in



need, support His Church, and extend His kingdom. Through our faithful giving, we can impact a broken world. We begin our stewardship emphasis the weekend of September 19-20.

May God use **Stewards Engaged in God's Work** to draw us all closer to Him, and may we become the God-pleasing stewards that He has made us to be.

Blessings in Him!
Pastor Karl Koeppen

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!!

St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School Worship Service and Picnic

Date: Sunday, August 30th

Time: Worship begins at 10:00am, Picnic afterwards

Following the Anniversary Celebrations in 2024-2025, people have expressed an interest in continuing to have a unified service and picnic at the beginning of the school year.

So, JOIN US as we celebrate God’s faithfulness to St Paul’s with a single worship service outside under a tent with a church picnic and games following.

We ask everyone to bring a dish or two to share...salads, side dishes or desserts.

We encourage families to stay and participate in the games and activities outside after they've eaten. And even if you don't participate in the games, stick around and enjoy visiting with others!

RSVP by using the Sign-up Genius Link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0444ADA72BAA8-64669122-stpauls>



Ministry Story - Sowing Seeds, Changing Lives

Changing Lives through Worship, Compassion, and Christian Education.

In June, I shared a story with you in worship. If you didn't hear it, I share it once again. This story is years in the making and is particularly meaningful to me.

It was December 2024, when I was contacted by a 7th grader at St. Paul's. She was not a member, but was interested in getting baptized and being confirmed. She kept hearing about baptism in school and confirmation class so she read a little more about it and decided it was something she desired. After I talked with her and her parents, we set up the baptism for an afternoon in the music room after school was out for the day.

On March 10, 2025, it was the student, her parents and me in the music room at the school with the baptismal font set up. As I began the Rite of Baptism, I looked up at her and saw a tear making its way down her face as she thought about the event taking place for her. . . . I can tell you that it was difficult to continue.

AND on May 3rd this year, at the late service, she was confirmed.

You know, . . . It is easy to look at your tithes and offerings as helping to pay the salaries and benefits of our church and school staff, keeping the lights on, or servicing the debt we are trying to retire. While your offerings do go to take care of those things, I want to challenge you to think about your offerings in a different way. Your offerings help to lay the groundwork and to provide the space and staff for God to use us to influence the faith of a young girl - - which God then used to change her life for eternity.

THAT is what God uses your tithes and offerings for.

Blessings in Him!

Pastor Karl Koeppen



America250: A Legacy of Faith, Family, and Freedom

This year, our nation celebrates a remarkable milestone—250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Anniversaries like this invite us not only to celebrate our history, but also to remember those whose lives and sacrifices have shaped the nation we enjoy today.

As I have reflected on America250, my own father has been especially on my mind. During a recent visit to the Air Force Memorial in Washington DC, I paused to read the words engraved in stone: Integrity First. Service Before Self. Excellence in All We Do. Nearby were other virtues: Sacrifice. Courage. Valor. They reminded me immediately of my dad.

He did not simply wear those values on a military uniform. He lived them. He taught them by the way he loved his family, faithfully served his country, kept his word, and quietly placed the needs of others before his own. Those lessons continue to shape both my life and my ministry.

While my calling is different from his, I pray that the same virtues would mark my vocation as a pastor: integrity in proclaiming God's Word without compromise; service before self in caring for Christ's flock; courage to stand upon the truth of Scripture; excellence in using the gifts God has entrusted to me; and sacrifice motivated by love for God and for my neighbor.

Jesus Himself teaches us, "*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends*" (John 15:13). We rightly honor the men and women who have served our nation with courage and selflessness. Their sacrifices remind us that freedom over the last 250 years often comes at great cost. Yet every act of faithful service ultimately points us to the One whose sacrifice is greater than them all. Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for the sins of the world and rose again in victory over death, securing an eternal freedom that no earthly nation can ever provide.

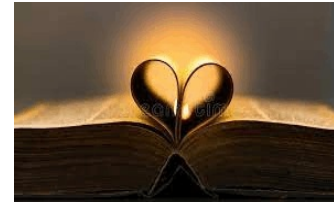
As Lutherans, we give thanks not only for our heavenly citizenship, but also for our earthly one. God works through earthly governments to preserve order and protect His

people (Romans 13:1–7). The freedoms we enjoy are gifts of His providence, enabling the Church to gather freely around His Word and Sacraments and equipping Christians to love and serve their neighbors in countless vocations.

As America enters its next 250 years, my prayer is not simply that our nation would remain prosperous, but that we would remain grateful. May we never forget that every good gift comes from our gracious Heavenly Father. May He continue to raise up men and women of integrity, courage, humility, and faithfulness. May He preserve our liberties, strengthen His Church, and lead us always to the cross and empty tomb of Christ, where our greatest hope is found.

This Independence Day, I thank God for my father's legacy, for all who have faithfully served our nation, and above all for our Savior, whose love is the foundation of every act of true service. May God continue to bless our nation as we celebrate America250, and may He grant each of us the grace to love our neighbors with the same self-giving love that Christ has first shown to us.

In Christ, Pastor Drinnon



“IS THE DEVIL REAL?”

Teacher: Roy W. Cordes

When: Every Tuesday at 9:45 am

beginning September 15th

Where: Fellowship Hall

Of course the answer is “Yes!” The class will read and discuss every Bible passage that gives us information about the devil (identified by over 10 different names) and determine how we can put on the full armor of God for our daily battle with him. We will start with the war in heaven where Satan led other angels in a revolt against God because he had free will, just like us, and was jealous and prideful in trying to become equal with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The first battle with God's creation started in the Garden of Eden where the serpent said to Eve, “Did God really say you could not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden?” And when Eve replied that the punishment was if they ate from it they would die, Satan replied in a half-truth, “You won't die!” And the rest is history as told to us in God's Word, the Bible. Is he still active today? Yes, he is according to I Peter 5:8, “*Stay alert!*”

Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.”

Military leaders say it is important to know your enemy before you go into battle. That is why we will be studying all of the Bible passages about the devil. Sun Tzu, a 6th century Chinese General and military strategist, wrote in his book, The Art of War:

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained, you will also suffer defeat. If you know neither your enemy nor yourself, you will succumb to every battle.”

As a soldier in God's Army, plan to attend the class each week for just one hour of your time for a time with the Lord!

MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST

Please join Pastor Koeppen on **Saturday, August 22nd and September 26th at 7:30 am** in the Riverside cafeteria to study God's Word over coffee and breakfast.



ROY W. CORDES BOOK SIGNING

Christian Faith Publishing Company will publish ***PRIME TIME WALKING AND TALKING WITH GOD*** written by our former principal, Roy W. Cordes. It is in the process of being printed and should be available by the end of August. Information will be made available in our church bulletin announcements when the price and source for purchase is announced.

On **Sunday, September 20th & 27th**, Mr. Cordes will be present in the coffee hour area for a book signing from 9:30 – 11 a.m. between services. Books will be available for purchase or you can bring a book that you purchased on Amazon or from other sources, and he will write a personal message for you and your family. Books sold by Mr. Cordes on those days can be paid for with cash or check, sorry nothing electronic (he is still old school). 20% of his profit will be donated to the Tuition Assistance Fund for our school to help families who need financial aid so their children can attend St. Paul's for a Christian education.

The book has just over 200 pages with 41 chapters about following Jesus and believing in Him for our eternal salvation in each chapter. Motivated by church signs, like “If God Had A Refrigerator,

Your Picture Would Be On It!”, Roy talks about God's love for us.

The book has been assigned these identification numbers:
ISBN 979-8-90308-159-2 (Paperback)
ISBN 979-8-90308-160-8 (e-Book)

“CHRISTMAS: THE REAL STORY”

Teacher: Pastor Dave Bottorff

***When: 4th Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
(3rd Tuesday in September)***

Where: Pastor Dave's home

“Christmas: The Real Story” is a 4-session study done by Harry Wendt that is designed to help people understand the REAL Christmas account revealed in Matthew and Luke. Middle Eastern scholar Dr. Kenneth Bailey's insights concerning first century Palestinian culture and the true meaning of the Greek word “kataluma” (“guest room”) in Luke 2:7 will open your eyes to an unforgettable insight about Christ's birth!

Pastor Bottorff will be leading this study at 7 pm on the following Tuesdays: September 15th, October 27th, November 24th, and January 26th in his home at 1573 Surrey Drive in Bourbonnais Please call him at 630-724-7369 to register for this class. The study guide costs \$10.

2ND GRADE BIBLE BREAKFAST

On **Sunday, August 30th**, the second grade students will receive a Bible during the 10:00 worship service prior to the church picnic. We will be hosting a breakfast for the students and their parents beforehand. Please meet in the cafeteria at 9:15 am. This will be a fun way to meet other second grade students and parents while enjoying a breakfast and activities. Please look for a letter in the mail. If you have any questions or do not receive a letter by August 8th, please contact the church office at 815-932-0312.



CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

If you have a child who is planning to begin or finish the confirmation program this year (typically 7th and 8th graders) and they do NOT attend our school, please watch your mail for a letter concerning confirmation classes. They will be starting mid to late August. If you do not receive a letter by August 8th, please call the church office.

YOUTH MINISTRY

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH

Summer is coming to a close. It's time to kick off a new school year in style with a scavenger hunt and lots of fun! All students entering 7th through 12th grades are invited to join us at the school campus from **3:00 to 6:30 pm on Sunday, August 16th**. Dress ready for a scavenger hunt and bring your swimsuit, towel, and a lawn chair. Parents, please plan to join us as well for a parents meeting at 3pm followed by fellowship. Hamburgers and hot dogs will await you at the end of the hunt!

2026-2027 YOUTH NIGHTS

This year, the St. Paul's Youth will learn how God's hope helps us get through whatever we are going through. We invite youth entering 7th through 12th grade to join us on Sunday evenings from 6-8pm at St. Paul's school campus for fun, fellowship, and devotions. Bring your Bible and a friend!

Sunday, Sept. 13th & 27th

Sunday, Oct. 18th

Sunday, Nov. 1st & 15th

Sunday, Dec. 6th: Christmas Party

Note: Parents, please attend the August 16th Back-to-School Bash or come inside with your youth to their first youth night to complete this year's youth ministry information form.

2028 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING INTEREST INFORMATION MEETING

Students entering 7th through 11th grades in 2026 are eligible to attend the 2028 LCMS Youth Gathering July 3rd - 7th, 2028 in San Antonio, TX. Families with students in this age group are invited to join us for lunch and an informational meeting on **Sunday, September 20th at 12:30pm** in the youth room to learn more about the Gathering opportunity from past attendees and the Youth Board. Held every 3 years since 1980, the Gathering provides thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God's people to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. During the 5 days of the Gathering, youth spend time together in God's Word, worship, service and fellowship with others from across the synod.



PROJECT COMPASSION & GABRIEL'S CALLERS

Would you consider joining? Our only agenda is to share God's love and to care for the well-being of our members, especially our shut-ins, those grieving, or anyone with special needs. We meet quarterly, at which time we have devotions and prayer and we share our ministry over a meal. Don't worry about whether or not you have the skills; we will train you. Our next quarterly meeting will be at Monical's Pizza in Bourbonnais on **Wednesday, August 12th at 6 p.m.** Anyone interested in becoming a visitor or caller is welcome to attend.

STAFF DEDICATION

Please join us on **Sunday, September 13th during the 8:30 am service** when our church and school staff will be recognized for their years of dedicated service. A reception will be held in the cafeteria following the service. Please come and express your appreciation.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



On **October 3rd**, LWML will be hosting an Operation Christmas Child workshop, where adults and children will be invited to help assemble shoe boxes that will be shipped to remote areas of the world as a witness of Jesus and his love. ***If you are interested in contributing, now would be a great time to stock up on some extra school supplies to include in the boxes!*** See the enclosed insert for a complete list of needs. There is a red box in the school lobby where you may put your donations. Thank you so much!!

FELLOWSHIP DINNER

Everyone is invited to join us for our monthly fellowship dinners. No special commitment is expected and these evenings are very casual – just come as you are when you are able. Our next two fellowship dinners will be at **6 pm on Friday, August 21st** at Chicago Dough and **Friday, September 18th** at Family House (312 S. Kennedy Dr., Bradley). If you would like to join us, please call or text Nancy Eden at 248-842-2837.

PRAIRIEVIEW FALL FESTIVAL



On **Friday, September 11th & Saturday, September 12th**, Prairieview Lutheran Homes in Danforth will be hosting their annual Fall Festival! There is truly something for everyone at this event, including a fish fry on Friday night, pork burger lunch and pork chop dinner on Saturday, bounce houses, mini golf and kids games, tractor show, live music, quilt auction, variety show, car show, craft vendors, baked goods, ice cream, silent auction, St. Paul's used book booth, pumpkins, mums, produce, live plant sale & more!

Be sure to put this event on your calendar and check out their Facebook page (Prairieview Lutheran Homes) for more details and a chance to sign up for the variety show.

We are still accepting book donations at both sites. If you have any questions or need a pick up from your home, call Jeanne Vilt at 815-932-9855 or text her at 815-216-0240 or call or text Nancy Campbell at 815-592-4273.

**TABEA NOW ACCEPTING
DONATIONS!**



Our semi-annual rummage sale will be **Thursday & Friday, Sept. 17th & 18th** from 8 am to 4 pm in the downtown gym. You may leave your treasures by the gym doors on Saturdays before church or you may schedule a time to drop off or pick up with Carol Ginger (815-922-5525) or Pat Baker (708-772-0933). Please DO NOT bring items to the school location. We respectfully ask that all donated clothing is clean. We cannot accept TVs or computers. The proceeds from our sales help purchase much needed supplies such as candles, wine, wafers, robes and other necessities that help enhance all church services. Thank you for your donations!

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

Enjoy a back-to-school celebration outside on the grounds of St. Paul's Lutheran School from **6pm to 8pm on Friday, Sept 11th**. All school families, church members and alumni are invited!! Watch for more details as the event approaches. This free evening of fun is brought to you by St. Paul's PTL and Thrivent Financial.

NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?

If you would rather receive the church newsletter electronically, please email crahn@stpaulslutheran.net.

**COLLEGE & MILITARY
ADDRESSES**

If you have a child going to college in the fall or enlisting in the military, please send their address to crahn@stpaulslutheran.net so that we may stay connected to them as they continue their journey. Thank you!

JUNE MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Baptized	1828
Communicant	1348
Communing.	434
<u>Attendance Avg. Weekend Worship:</u>	
Month	234
Year-to-date	277

YTD FINANCES (through 7/26/26)

Thankofferings

Receipts: \$ 62,733.61
Total Needed: \$64,076.92
% of Need: 97.90%

Building Fund

Receipts: \$6,018.00
Total Needed: \$13,461.52
% of need: 44.71%

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School
1780 Career Center Road
Bourbonnais, IL 60914**

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