

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran School
210 South Ringold Street
Janesville WI 53545
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www.stpaulsjanesville.com

Spring 2019

The Flamethrower

St. Paul's Alumni Association Newsletter

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6



What's New?

What's new at St. Paul's? Lots! In the past few years St. Paul's has started a one to one program for the middle school. This means that each student has a laptop that they use in each class. This allows the teachers to do new things they couldn't do before. Things like Quizlet Live, Kahoot, or a digital breakout. Things like video journals and collaborative presentations. It is exciting to see students and teachers engaged in learning in ways that weren't even possible 10 years ago. St. Paul's has also started a computer coding class for students in 5-8th grade. Computer coding is a skill our students will need in the future, just as cursive (which we still teach) is a skill they need to translate the past. That is a big part of what we do; we prepare our students for what comes next while plugging them into what came before.

Our goal amidst all this change has always been to uphold and teach what never changes. What hasn't changed? Lots. We still share the love of Christ and the Gospel message with our students and their families. We still serve our community through mission projects and fundraisers. We still provide a quality education centered on Christ. That is why we have a school. That is why St. Paul's was started. We share Jesus with our community, with our students, with everyone.

St. Paul's school is 153 years old, and we have made it this far because our foundations are sure. While that isn't new for us, the love of Jesus is new for some of our students. Some of them experience Jesus for the first time here, at the school. I can't think of a better reason to continue to do what we do.

Pray that God would bring families to St. Paul's, so we can share the Gospel message with them.

Rob Lunak, Principal



ST. Paul's
Lutheran Church, School & Daycare

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor	2
Generations.....	3
Mrs. Kathy Overley Retires	4
Mrs. Lois Wahrle Retires ...	5
Alumni Memories.....	6
Faculty Member Report.....	7
In Memorium	7
2019 JLIT Full of Excitement & Memories	8
Current Student Observations	9



Hi, St. Paul's School Alumni!

Greetings in the wonderful Name of our once dead but now living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! May this note find you well blessed.

Our former St. Paul's principal, Dennis Vierk, has asked me to write an article to update you on the ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Since my mother taught me to always pay attention to whatever a principal said to me I am glad to do so.

Eight years ago the Holy Spirit called me as St. Paul's senior pastor. Our church and school had undergone several dramatic changes. Three pastors had all left or retired within the year in 2011. Likewise, the school principal had retired and had been recently replaced with a new principal.

At the time, it was apparent that St. Paul's Church needed to undergo a different staffing model. Instead of two associate pastors, St. Paul's would be served by three Directors of Christian Education (DCE). These DCE's would be able to start ministries that would focus on meeting the spiritual needs of our school children and their families. Our church staff has also been challenged to take their ministries out into the community.

In 2013 we were blessed with DCE intern, later called DCE, John Mueller for youth and children ministries. Needless to say, John immediately bonded with our kids and youth and these ministries continue to grow by leaps and bounds. Through the Lord Jesus using John our youth meet each week at St. Paul's for Bible study and fellowship. John has now expanded his youth ministry by leading Bible studies and fellowship groups in two local high schools. Trips to our national youth gathering, as well as local and national mission trips have come from John's ministry. Please pray for John and his ministry to God's children.

In 2014 we added a full-time DCE position for church and school music. That position is currently filled by Ann Henny. Ann's responsibilities involve teaching classroom music and leading our blended worship services. Ann is in the process of developing a youth praise band. Please pray for Ann as she continues to grow St. Paul's music ministry.

In 2015, one of our faculty members, Kathy Pingel, agreed to leave classroom teaching to head up our family and women's ministry. What a Holy Spirit-led act that was! Our women's and family ministries have simply exploded. Multiple Bible studies, fellowship events, and retreats are regularly being held. Our women's retreat this spring recently wrapped up with over one hundred participants from our church, local churches, and the community. Kathy has been able to add an outward focus to her vibrant ministries through service activities, mission projects, and community donations. Please pray for Kathy and her ministry to St. Paul's school families and young parents.

In 2018 St. Paul's entered into partnership with Lutheran Church Charities to receive a comfort dog named Mary. Mary has been instrumental in bringing the love of Jesus Christ to hundreds of people both inside and outside of St. Paul's church. She has visited hospitals, nursing homes, funeral homes, the homebound, Alzheimer/dementia patients, and recently was present at the funerals of two Illinois State Patrolmen. Wherever Mary goes and whoever she visits she brings a calming presence of concern and love. Please pray for those who handle Mary and help administer this very vital ministry.

(Continued on page 3)

Hi, St. Paul's School Alumni!

(Continued from page 2)

Finally, St. Paul's has just received word that we shall receive a graduate of our Concordia Seminary, St. Louis to serve as our associate pastor. The main element of our associate pastor's call will be to serve as a missionary sent to minister to the millennial generation of our Janesville area.

Here are some sobering statistics concerning millennials:

- Only 2 in 10 Americans under 30 believe attending a church is important or worthwhile (an all-time low).
- 59 percent of millennials raised in a church have dropped out.
- 35 percent of millennials have an *anti-church* stance, believing the church does more harm than good.
- Millennials are the least likely age group of anyone to attend church (by far).

Our associate/missionary pastor will develop an extensive ministry to millennials that will include small group Bible studies/fellowships, service events, and an off-site, ultra-contemporary service that is friendly to those who are wary of the Christian church.

Please keep these efforts in your prayers. I would also ask that you would look back at the blessings you received through St. Paul's and then prayerfully consider financially supporting its ministry efforts. Many of you attended St. Paul's School when there was no tuition. At that time St. Paul's Church financially supported the majority of the cost of educating students. While St. Paul's Church still does meet much of the financial cost of educating students, its ability to do so is waning as overall charitable giving in our country has not increased since the 1970's.

Our Lord challenged His Church to seek first God's Kingdom and all the things of life will be added to it. By God's grace, St. Paul's is trying to do just that. Last week two St. Paul's students were baptized into God's Kingdom and this week I have meetings to talk with three families about their children being baptized! Please join your fellow St. Paul's alumni in praising God for St. Paul's ministry. Praise God also for your prayerful support our ministry!

Pastor Dan Decker

Generations Attending St. Paul's

1st generation:

Lillian Podewels Willing (class of 1907)

2nd generation:

Gilbert Willing (class of 1942)

3rd generation:

Linda Willing Cooper (class of 1967)

4th generation:

Derek Cooper (class of 2000)

Renee Cooper Moen (class of 2003)

5th generation:

Derek's daughter, Kenna, is in Mrs. Gestrich's 2nd grade

Derek's daughter, Brooke, is in Mrs. Amy Benedict Denson's ('94) P4J class

Renee's daughter, Tenley, is in Mrs. Wojcik's P4J class

Renee's daughter, Sierra, is 2 years old and looking forward to attending St. Paul's

NOTE: If you have a "Generations at St. Paul's" story to tell send it to:

churchoffice@stpaulsjanesville.com



Mrs. Kathy Overley Retires After 19 Years at St. Paul's

Mrs. Kathy Overley got her teaching degree from Concordia University Chicago in River Forest, IL, in 1989. She first taught 3rd grade at Hope Lutheran School in Chicago. After she and her husband David were married she next taught at Immanuel Lutheran School in Crystal Lake, Illinois. In 1997 they moved to Janesville and joined St. Paul's congregation. She started out as a substitute teacher at St. Paul's and then began teaching on Thursday afternoons for Mrs. Kathy Pingel, who taught choir, in 2000. She says, "I began teaching in the Resource Room Math position in 2008, a position I absolutely love." Kathy has also been active with "Moms in Touch" - "Moms in Prayer" group weekly at school and has helped greatly with St. Paul's youth group while her children were actively involved.

Kathy and David Overley have 3 children who all attended St. Paul's. Ashley *Overley* Rawlings ('07) was married last summer. Drew ('09) is newly married - wedding on May 4th this year. Micah ('15) is a senior at Craig High School.

In retirement she is looking forward to spending time with family and in her craft room. She is also excited to have more time with the Comfort Dog ministry and working with our Comfort Dog, Mary.

"I feel blessed to have been part of an amazing school with an even more amazing faculty and staff," she explains. "I am thankful to St. Paul's church for the unending support that is given to sharing the message of Christ to our students. I am thankful for the many prayers that have been lifted up on behalf of the students, faculty, and staff. Thank you for the prayers and support you have given to me during my years teaching at St. Paul's."

Kathy has been a very valuable teacher and asset to our school for 19 years. We will miss her and wish her God's blessings in her retirement. If you have been blessed to have Kathy teach you or your child or if you are a friend and want to congratulate her she would love to hear from you. You can email her at: kaddm5@gmail.com.



Mrs. Lois Wahrle Retires After 40 years

After 40 years of teaching, Lois Wahrle is retiring in June from St. Paul's, where she has taught Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades at various times. She taught 4th through 6th grade at Trinity Lutheran School in Athens, Wisconsin for one year before coming to Janesville. Lois graduated from Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1978 coming to St. Paul's in 1979. She earned 15 credits of extra education since that time.

She was born in Ladysmith, Wisconsin where her father, Eldore Messerschmidt, was pastor. When she was 10 years old her father took a divine call to Marshfield where he served as pastor for the remainder of his pastoral ministry.

During her time at St. Paul's besides classroom teaching she has coached girls' softball, volleyball, and basketball. She has contributed hundreds of hours to preparing the annual school yearbooks for publication. In addition, she has been involved with Christmas programs and operettas. In 1999 she started the Girls' CYO basketball program and was commissioner of the league. Lois has used her voice to praise God, first in Senior Choir and now as part of St. Paul's Praise Team contemporary worship group.

Mrs. Wahrle is married to Mr. Dennis Wahrle and has four children. Her four children all graduated from St. Paul's. Her three sons (Joel '97, Jonathan '01, and Ben '06) live in Janesville. Her second child, Katie (Wahrle) Huie '98, is our 5th grade teacher. Katie recently had her new baby (Grace) joining older sister 6 year old Emily. Mrs. Wahrle looks forward to having time to babysit for Grace when Katie is back in the classroom.

Mrs. Wahrle's other interests are scrapbooking, quilting, knitting, crocheting, and spending time with her family. If you or one or more of your children have benefitted from Mrs. Wahrle's kindness as teacher or friend you may send her a congratulatory and thank you message at her email address: wahrle@att.net. She would LOVE to hear from you.

CONGRATULATIONS MRS. WAHRLE! WE PRAY GOD WILL CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AS YOU BEGIN THIS NEW CHAPTER IN YOUR LIFE!





**Alumni Memories by
Susan (Sue) *Knoerr* Benedict
Class of 1968**

St. Paul's church and school has had a rich heritage in educating our young members. My participation in the program was only a short seven years beginning in the second grade from the Fall of 1961 until graduation from eighth grade in 1968. It began at an old school on Academy Street, moved to our new and current building in the Fall of 1963, and served to influence many to pursue Christian education as a career choice - myself included.

Most of my memories at St. Paul's began in the fourth grade when we moved into our new building. One of my earliest school memories in our new school was a brand new intern teacher named Mr. Rogalski. We had a class of 36 kids and I'm sure we were a challenge. One day he had set up a really cool science experience that he called "kick the can", whereby he built up air pressure in a closed can by heating it on a hot plate. As it cooled the air compressed and the can collapsed. The experiment was impressive but the hot plate accidentally burned a hole in the counter of our brand new classroom. To this day there is an insert in the counter where the hole was.

Our next year we had another new teacher named Mr. Dahm for fifth grade. My family home was located through the block on the back side of the school playground. My dad had built us a treehouse thirty feet up in a century old elm tree which was visible from the playground. Mr. Dahm would often tease me about how he wanted to climb up to my tree house. One day I challenged him to come over after school to climb the tree. As he stood looking up from the base of the tree, he had the look of trepidation but he agreed to climb. Once he had ascended to the second crotch of the tree he stopped. Frozen in fear he told me to call the fire department. At 11 years of age, I laughed, thinking he was kidding. Again he told me to call the fire department because he couldn't get down. I managed to coax him down and he never did make it into my tree house.

Mr. Gersmehl was our sixth grade teacher and also the athletic director. The gymnasium was respectfully named after him: The Lienhard (Len) Gersmehl Memorial Gym. Each year our traditional Christmas program was performed on Christmas Eve. We always sang the entire Christmas Cantata. One year the 8th grade was required to stand on the stage for the whole performance. Part way through, several students began to faint and one-by-one, like dominoes, they all fell over.

Other memories included bus rides to basketball games, annual basketball tournament in Freeport, Illinois, confirmation, and graduation.

With more than just these fun memories our school impressed on many students the call to serve future generations as teachers, pastors, school board members, elders, and certainly hundreds of parent volunteers for generations. The work of the Holy Spirit continues to call our youth to serve our Savior and community.



Faculty
Member
Report:

Elizabeth
Decker



Who's Jesus?

You may be surprised to know that the title of this article was actually a question from one of our students on the first day of school this year. The class was preparing for the very first chapel of the new school year. Each child was lining up and was told that they were going to chapel. One student shouted out, "what's chapel?". The answer came back, "Well, chapel is like going to church". The student asked another question, "What's church?" The teacher, understanding that the question was sincere, replied; "Church is where we worship Jesus". And yet one more question from the student that would change this veteran teacher's outlook on teaching the faith, "Who's Jesus?".

As many of us know, St. Paul's Lutheran School has embraced the Choice Voucher program from the state of Wisconsin. This program is for parents that desire their children to attend a private or parochial school who could otherwise not afford it. The state of Wisconsin will fund the student's enrollment and tuition.

What makes the voucher program stand out here at St. Paul's? It's JESUS! Here at St. Paul's we not only learn about Him in our religion classes and not only hear about Him when we go to chapel, we experience Him daily as we teach forgiveness by doing it, living it and sharing it with our students. Can you imagine a six year old never having heard about her Saviour and friend? And now, through Choice, children from our community can experience the GRACE we hold so precious!

What about that student now? Would you believe... the first to raise a hand to answer questions in Jesus Time, says memory work with no prompts, and sings at the top of their lungs, "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know, For the Bible Tells Me So!" Oh the joy of watching a faith grow!

Please pray for our teachers and staff as we are daily reminded of our awesome responsibility to share God's great love to these children!



In Memorium

Alumni death notices

**Grace Droegemueller
Pegorsch '55**
1.19.2019 / Wausau, WI

Carol Crosby Turner '42
3.9.2019 / Janesville, WI

Jeff Peper '77
3.18.2019 / Loganville, WI

David Redmann '86
4.17.2019 / La Crescenta,
CA

**Note: If you have
information on the death
of any St. Paul's alumnus
it may be mailed to:**

St. Paul's Lutheran School
Alumni Association
210 St. Ringold Street
Janesville, WI 53545

Or emailed to
Churchoffice
@stpaulsjanesville.com

Or call the church office
(608) 754-4471 ext. 3

Watch for our next
newsletter in Fall 2019





Left to right: Karen Zastoupil, Jean Riepl, Sara Knuth, Josh Knuth, Rich Zastoupil, and Bob Zastoupil.

2019 JLIT Full of Excitement and Memories

For all who remember your **Janesville Lutheran Invitational Basketball Tournament** experience fondly this year's **47th Annual JLIT** was also full of excitement and memories. Our boys A team took 4th place. They beat Immanuel, Belvidere 50-36 Friday night, lost to St. Paul, Mt. Prospect 28-19 Saturday afternoon, won 43-37 over Pilgrim, Green Bay on Saturday night, and lost to St. Paul, Bonduel 29-19 in the 3rd/4th place game. Our cheerleaders took the 2nd Place trophy. On Saturday afternoon our girls A team played St. Paul, Mt. Prospect and won 35-27.

A highlight of the weekend came before the Sunday game when two of our oldest alumni were introduced. **Class of 1939 alumni Bob Zastoupil and Jean (Will) Riepl** were there to watch their great-grandson (8th grader Josh Knuth) play. Bob's wife, Beulah, was St. Paul's kindergarten teacher for 22 years before retiring in 1986 and had also served as cheerleading coach for many years - coaching in the early JLIT era. She died in 1997. Bob and Beulah ran the popcorn concession stand for many years. Jean's husband Harvey was on the Board of Christian Education when the "new" school was built in 1963 and was a staunch supporter of St. Paul's. Harvey Riepl (class of 1936) died in 2000. Bob's three sons and Jean's eight daughters all attended St. Paul's Lutheran School, as have many grandchildren..

Bob's son Rich (class of 1968) married Karen (*Riepl* - class of 1968). Their daughter Sara (*Zastoupil*) Knuth (class of 1991) is 4th grade teacher at St. Paul's and her son Josh played for St. Paul's this year. Josh made a 3 pointer to start the scoring for St. Paul's on Sunday to the delight of his family. Bob's son Jack Zastoupil ('62) also refs for JLIT games. (**See 4 generations picture taken after the game**).

(Continued on page 9)

2019 JLIT Full of Excitement and Memories

(Continued from page 8)

Besides Josh Knuth, sons of alumni playing in this year's JLIT were: Chris Mullen - Michael Mullen ('95), Gavin Roth - Alex ('01), Caleb Krueger - Beth (*Johnson*) Krueger ('92), Caleb Wier - Andy ('94), Noah Martinson - Aaron ('96), Charlie Kober - Kory (7th grader in 1986), and Levi Ames - father Preston ('86) and mother Lisa (*Ehret*) Hurda ('88). Levi was the leading scorer for St. Paul's during the weekend with 55 points in 4 games. Michael Mullen was also assistant coach along with Josh Stanton (class of 2016) for head coach Derek Stanton.

Daughters of alumni who were on the A Girls team were: Caidee Bertagnoli - Dan ('93), Maycie Denson - Amy (*Benedict*) Denson ('94), and Samara Oas - father Josh ('91) and mother Becky Hanson ('95). Head coach was Kevin Hendrikson ('85). Assistant coaches were Paige Hendrikson (class of 2015) and Dan Bertagnoli.

Daughters of alumni who were on A Cheerleading squad were: Caidee Bertagnoli - Dan ('93) and Alyson Ellefson - Angie (*Jensen*) Ellefson ('91). Natasha Arnold ('06) was a coach.

The 48th Annual JLIT will be held the weekend of February 28, 29, & March 1, 2020.



Current Student Observations By Maycie Denson

My name is Maycie Denson. I am in seventh grade. I am the third generation to come through St. Paul's. My grandparents and my mother also attended St. Paul's. My brother and I, along with our little cousins, now attend.

I have participated in volleyball, basketball, and my favorite - track. This year I was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society. I like to volunteer for our school's Trunk n' Treat event. I also volunteer to ring bells with my basketball team and fellow NJHS members.

Our school has an annual operetta. This year it was titled "A Not So Terrible Parable". It was an awesome event that took place on May 3rd. My school also has another annual event that we call the "Easter Walk". The students and some parents walk around the school's neighborhood delivering treat bags along with invitations to St. Paul's Church's Easter services.

On May 5th my class will be heading off to Washington, D.C. for a week. We will be visiting many educational museums, monuments, government buildings, and historical sites. Also on May 5th the eighth grade class will be leaving for Florida. They will be going to different amusement parks for a week.

This year I have learned a lot and it has gone by pretty fast, but I can't wait for summer.

Note: Maycie is the daughter of Amy *Benedict* Denson ('94) and current pre-kindergarten teacher at St. Paul's and the granddaughter of Susan (Sue) *Knoerr* Benedict ('68) and retired kindergarten teacher (taught at St. Paul's from 1979 - 2017).

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ALUMNI
NEWSLETTER

**St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran
Church, School and
Day Care
Alumni Association**

Our sole purpose for forming this Alumni Association is **"to connect the past with the future at St. Paul'."** In order to do this at this time we have a charter to do four things: 1) Create a database of current contact information. 2) Create a multi-faceted communication vehicle to keep alumni informed and connected. 3) Facilitate alumni gatherings. 4) Provide opportunities for alumni who wish to support the school.

**"Connecting
the Past with the Future
at St. Paul's"**

Do We Have Your Email Address?

To be good stewards of the gift's the Lord has given us, we'd like to send *The Flamethrower* to you electronically. To do that, we'll need some information.

Send us an email to: SchoolOffice@stpaulsjanesville.com. Include your name; (maiden name); years you attended St. Paul's School; current mailing address; current phone number; and email address. Please put "Alumni Info" in the subject line.

Thank you for helping us to keep in touch!

