St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Profile
298 S. Harrison Avenue + Kankakee, Illinois 60901

“Seeking to grow in Christ;
Sharing, reaching out,
and making God’s presence known to all.”

Who Are We?

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church is located in Kankakee, IL, and also serves Episcopalians in the surrounding towns and counties. A rectory is attached to the church building. The parish was founded in 1863 and has had only 5 full-time priests in the past 70 years. At this time, due to our current financial condition, we are seeking a half-time priest; we have a long-term goal, with continued congregation-building, to make this a full-time position again.

In the ten years with our former rector, our congregation has transitioned from 99% non-Hispanic to 30% non-Hispanic and 70% Hispanic. This was due primarily to the strong evangelism and mission gifts of the rector, which he shared with us and with those in our surrounding neighborhoods. We currently have 67 households on our rolls, and although most of our non-Hispanic members are not - or only slightly! - Spanish speakers, we have developed a bi-lingual 10:15 service using the BCP liturgy, which is appreciated by all. We have lay translators and lesson readers every Sunday. Our organist and choirmaster, along with the choir and congregation, play/sing English and Spanish hymns. Both English and Spanish hymnals, as well as bilingual service booklets are available. Our 8:00 service remains in English with no music.
A Parish In Harmony

We are blessed that St. Paul’s has no unsettled internal strife and welcomes everyone. The successful blending of two cultures was possible because of the welcoming environment that has occurred in the past 5 years. Joint celebrations of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Quinceañeras are a blessing.

Lay Leadership

Our small parish is active. One of the strengths of the congregation is the willingness of lay persons of both cultures to take on tasks, separately or together; a common goal in our worship and fellowship is to bring our cultures closer. Hispanic and Anglo members work side by side. Lay persons form the altar guild, and are fellowship hosts; both English-speaking and bilingual speakers serve on the Vestry. English and Spanish speakers are Eucharistic ministers in the services and also visit/contact shut-ins. Currently, lay ministers also lead a healing mass on Wednesdays.
Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is an important aspect of St. Paul’s. We have youth acolyte servers and torch bearers, and have several younger children willing to be taught these important liturgical functions in the future. In five years, the Sunday school has increased from an average of 4 children to 12 children. We have 45 Sunday school-aged children, and hope to incorporate more of them as “regulars.” Dedication to the youth of our community has led to parish growth for us, and we aim to continue this work.

A Focus on Outreach

Community outreach is an ongoing mission for us. St. Paul’s has been involved for nearly 10 years with “Blessings in a Backpack;” our local chapter currently provides weekly food care packages for 320 local school children whose families are below the poverty level. Our involvement has been both financial, and “hands on” as we donate and pack food once a month. The former rector was very active with our local River Valley Clergy Alliance. He also arranged with the local court system to be a designated community service organization; we have had numerous people “work off their hours” doing various outdoor and indoor maintenance jobs at the church, which has benefitted both community and parish, and has helped to build our membership. The rector guided several of our own Latino members through this confusing justice system. We continue to look for other ways to serve the community, such as opportunities to use our centrally-positioned church building for community service.
Our Rector

We seek a rector who has an interest in the Latino culture of so many of our parishioners; being bi-lingual or having prior knowledge of Spanish would be a huge plus! Another parish priority is support of our non-Hispanic congregants, many of whom will benefit from regular, co-ordinated home or assisted-living visits by priest and laity. There is significant interest in development of Christian education opportunities throughout the week, directed by the priest but potentially led by lay ministers. Continuing guidance of our membership growth and youth and community ministries is critical for St. Paul’s. Finally, a strong foundation in liturgy will be valuable as we continue to strengthen our program of meaningful bilingual worship, respecting both our past and our future as a parish family.

Please watch our private YouTube video at: https://youtu.be/gtQmarUfCA4

To apply for this position, please complete the Clergy Information Form for Transitions found on the diocesan website: https://episcopalchicago.wufoo.com/forms/m1poxg24cwsj2w/

For more information about this position, please contact Andrea Mysen, Director of Ministries, at amysen@episcopalchicago.org or 312-751-4203.

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