

# PARISH PROFILE 2025



## St. Paul's Episcopal Church of DeKalb, Illinois

*A welcoming and inclusive Christian community*



## Welcome!

St. Paul's is a progressive Christian community whose doors are open to all. In the following pages, you will learn about our history and facilities, how we live our commitment to community outreach in DeKalb and beyond, how we currently worship, and how we strive for the spiritual growth of everyone we encounter—whether a long-time active member or a friend in Christ passing through.

We have a collaborative lay leadership style and a variety of ministries in which our parishioners are very active. Indeed, nearly all parishioners live their faith through at least one ministry, with many involved in several. When you join St. Paul, you join a supportive and intentional family that enjoys opening our hearts and hands to the broader community.

### Our mission

*We are called to gather around the sacred story and table of Christ where all are invited to be fed and everyone's story matters.*



*Our Vestry, with Senior Warden Peg Newby at right, looks forward to welcoming and working closely with a new rector.*

# Become a part of our story

The history of St. Paul's Episcopal congregation began in the 1850s. The first church building was constructed in 1861, more than three decades before DeKalb became the home to Northern Illinois University.



*The original St. Paul's, built in 1861.*

The current church building is the third in the history of the parish and was built in 1967. Cornerstones from the first two church buildings were incorporated into the new building, maintaining a symbolic tie to the previous churches and parishioners. It was built on six acres of land purchased by the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago so that the church could be near the campus of Northern Illinois University.



*The new church building was completed in 1967 to be closer to the Northern Illinois University campus, which abuts our property.*



*The church as viewed from above, with the parish hall to the right and rectory to the upper left, nestled among trees. The NIU college campus edge is just visible at the very top of the picture.*



*Youth tending a bed in Spring in our Rick Johns Memorial Community Gardens. The rectory is visible in the background.*

Prior to 2000, the lower level served as the meeting and social area of the church. Named the Saint Timothy Center for Spiritual Formation, it has a large playroom for elementary-age children, too. We hope our journey in the future will see more young families once again join our faith community and are excited to have the space for them to play and grow.

The generosity and energy of past and current members has blessed us with wonderful facilities and grounds. We believe in using those as an expression of



*Our church path connects the Annie Glidden North neighborhood to the northern edge of NIU campus, and we maintain signage with uplifting messages.*

our faith. Examples include a pathway for college students and residents of the surrounding neighborhood, a Little Free Library to serve youth in the area, and our Rick Johns Memorial Community gardens—one of our most active ministries and a vital partnership with the university. We have an outdoor patio for get-togethers and cookouts. We

hope, in the future, to make it an internet hotspot for college students passing by on the “church path” connecting Normal Road with Garden Street and adjacent NIU buildings.



*Parishioners gather with visiting Rev. Ron Larson, one of our supply clergy in recent months, to bless our Little Free Library on the sidewalk fronting our church.*

In 2000, we expanded our facilities to include a fellowship hall with a full kitchen, a large, air-conditioned gathering room, a nursery, and a meeting room as well as parish offices. This is where we host coffee hours after every worship service and a myriad of events for our members and the community you will learn more about in the following pages—from dinners to movie nights, from yoga practice to celebratory moments with the college students who work with our parish gardens.



*A fellowship luncheon in our parish hall celebrating our relationship with New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. The hall has a large and fully-equipped kitchen, and windows along the south and west walls with views of our church path and gardens.*

## Our vision

***We pray that our hearts may be opened to seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to be the church and Christian community that God is calling us to be.***

## Support us in community outreach

We are engaged in our wider community in a variety of ways. Our Wardens and Vestry members represent us well at the Diocesan Conventions. Our gardens have been an important connection to other churches in the Diocese, too, with funding from Episcopal Charities and our presence at their annual galas. We have a friendly relationship with the Islamic Society just down the street, sharing occasional visits and meals with them, and offer our parish hall for some of their functions and parking lot for their use for overflow needs. Past rectors have been involved in regular meetings with local clergy from other faith traditions, and we find this valuable for building a stronger ecumenical and interfaith community in the DeKalb region.

The Episcopal Church Women's group leads giving basket efforts quarterly. The group discerns a cause to support and then has a basket at church coffee hours and in the rear of church during services for donations. St. Paul has a longstanding tradition of regularly supporting area nonprofits, such as Cassandra's Closet at New Hope Church, Kapper Adult Day Care, Safe Passage for victims of domestic violence, and area elementary schools.



*Our Episcopal Church Women are very active in selecting a myriad of local nonprofits and other organizations to support financially and with our time. Examples include Barb Food Mart and Kapper Adult Day Care.*

We hope our future rector can help us invigorate the university and neighborhood relationships even more. We are especially excited about cultivating a rich relationship with the new Dr. Leroy Mitchell Elementary School recently built just a seven-minute walk from our door, which brought 500 students to our immediate neighborhood in Fall 2025.



St. Paul's has long been committed to sustainability, especially by providing food and community connection through our Rick Johns Memorial Community Gardens. For the third year in a row, we welcomed 74 Environmental Studies students across the year to both the Gardens and a companion satellite site we helped collaboratively develop at the local New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. Our efforts are supported by two years of Parish Partner Grant support from Episcopal Charities and help provide over two tons of food to address insecurity in the Annie Glidden North Neighborhood.



*Youth volunteering in our community gardens (above) and a view of our garden with the new hoop house structure added (below).*

A highlight of our engagement with the university students and other volunteers from the area is a fellowship dinner at which they share stories of personal growth. The gardens have helped us open our doors to more youth and build meaningful intergenerational relationships. We're

excited about continuing to expand the gardens' impact after adding a pollinator garden and hoop houses to the core vegetable and herb gardens.

Through the gardens, we have also become much more connected with the Annie Glidden North neighborhood and especially with New Hope Missionary Baptist Church and area pantries. We value our ability to strengthen food sovereignty and security in the neighborhood, which is a food desert. As noted earlier, the gardens are our most vibrant welcome and connection point with Northern Illinois University's faculty and students.



*Friends from New Hope Missionary Baptist Church--home of a satellite community garden--join NIU Environmental Studies students involved in the garden and our own parishioners for end-of-semester fellowship dinners in Fall (below) and Spring (above).*

## Join us in worship and stewardship



*Our worship space is organized "in the round" and with a communion rail encircling the altar. We have a 21-rank, 4-manual organ and a Yamaha grand piano.*

We are very open to all individuals. Our website says "all are welcome, no exceptions!" and we live by that. As a church that is stable but was once much larger, we had struggled with transitioning through degrowth, including the loss of young families and youth in general, and then being without a rector. We are proud that—with strong lay leadership from all our members—we were able to maintain continuity in worship through Episcopal and Lutheran supply clergy and Morning Prayer. We are eager for a rector to guide our considerable energy!

We have one service at 9:30 that follows a fairly traditional approach to liturgy. We

believe strongly in a welcoming and inclusive environment in our weekly service. We have printed bulletins that include all music, readings, and other service components, and offer welcome bags to newcomers. A recent Sight and Sound project now allows us to extend our community online, whether for homebound parishioners, those away on travel, or visitors from a distance on their faith journey. After each service, we have a coffee hour hosted by parishioners and offer nametags to help guests feel comfortable meeting us. We are especially proud to have welcomed some more diverse faces in recent

years, including some members of the university community, and hope to strengthen this growth. We value preaching that engages both scripture and contemporary issues in thoughtful ways.

We have a rich history of music in our liturgy, bolstered by dedicated staff, a beautiful organ, a grand piano, and handbells. We have many gifted musicians among our parishioners who actively participate and have held Taize services and concerts. Nearly all our members have served as or currently take pride in serving as ushers, lay readers, crucifers, musicians, assistants in our streaming services, and members of the Altar Guild and Flower Guild.



*Music is central to our liturgy. Members are active in our church choir, seen above and upper left with Music Director Hannah Buckle on the left in each photo. Parishioner John Novak organized an organ concert (left) featuring our own Kathleen Johnson (second from right).*

## Walk with us in faith & fellowship journeys

We are a warm and welcoming church, inviting people from all walks of life to join us and become contributing members. We live our commitment to diversity and inclusion, welcoming individuals regardless of their identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences. We actively encourage those who might be interested in ministry. Parishioners are highly involved with the liturgical ministries such as Flower and Altar Guilds, our music ministry (organ, piano,



and a small choir), running our live stream, ushering, and reading, and many will transition from one ministry into several. During our time without a rector, we have found the commitment of time, talent, and wisdom from our longtime and newer members to be invaluable in building lay leadership, and we are eager to again have a rector to marshal these gifts.



We are intentional in never speaking against other religious traditions or non-religious spiritual practices. We understand that those who visit us may be in a position of vulnerability as they explore options for expressing and experiencing faith and spirituality.

*A formation event with Rev. Joe Gastiger on Keeping the Faith in a Secular World (above) and one of our monthly Fellowship Dinners (below).*

In just the past year, we have hosted well-attended fellowship dinners monthly at local restaurants, occasional book and contemplation discussions, monthly movie nights with dinner, weekly yoga, and—as noted earlier—the coffee hours. Our newer members regularly become involved in these activities, and for some of our non-member friends these are a primary source of engagement with our parish family.

We care for our parishioners unable to attend services by visiting them as we are able, and we hope a new rector can help us reinvigorate a monthly service with communion for those in local retirement and assisted living homes. We are pleased that our live streamed service can help maintain our community from afar.



*Parish members reach out to connect with new university students at the Campus Involvement Fair at Northern Illinois University.*

## Your future home

Communication. Learning. Growth. Inclusivity. When asked to choose four words to describe the qualities essential to the future leaders of our worshipping community, including our rector, these were what we chose. Our rector will be an active part of all we have shared in the preceding pages and a leader in new initiatives that strengthen and revitalize us.



We are excited to have a rectory on site, affording the rector ready access to the church and to the community of DeKalb, in which we are centrally located. The rectory has five bedrooms, two full bathrooms, and a garage all on one level. One bedroom has a separate entrance for use as a consultation office if needed. It can accommodate even a large family if needed.



*Our church grounds. In the lower picture, you can see the rectory in the near view with the church in the distance.*

Disbursements Summary	2025 Budget
Total Clergy Disbursements	\$113,150.00*
Total Worship and Fellowship	\$10,750.00
Total Music	\$26,023.90
Total Administrative	\$48,962.56
Total Building and Grounds	\$89,066.00
Total Church Giving	\$13,050.00
	<i>* includes budget amount for new hire</i>
<b>Total General Fund Disbursements</b>	<b>\$301,002.46</b>

Receipts	2025 Budget
800-101 - Pledges	\$68,440.00
800-102 - Regulars/ID Offerings	\$10,000.00
800-103 - Visitors/Open plate	\$500.00
800-108 - Endowment Fund Allocation	\$221,162.46
800-104 - ECW Parish Support	\$500.00
800-109 - Bishop's Fund	\$400.00
800-901 - Parking Pass	\$50.00
800-907 - Parish Hall Rental	\$0.00
800-104a - Online Giving Fees taken before deposit	-\$50.00
800-995 - Other Misc	\$0.00
Memorial Funds	\$0.00
	<b>\$301,002.46</b>

# About Northern Illinois University



*NIU undergraduate students at a Week of Welcome event.*

NIU blends academic excellence with Midwestern authenticity. The vibrant campus community thrives on the rich diversity of perspectives, experiences and ideas that each member brings, creating an environment where innovation flourishes and everyone can excel. The university has grown from its

founding as a teachers' college into a premier research institution, balancing academic excellence with personal attention to every student's unique journey. With over 15,000 students and hundreds of



*The NIU campus, with the East Lagoon—just a few blocks from the church—in the foreground.*

faculty and staff, the campus pulses with possibilities — from research labs where students from all backgrounds work alongside faculty to performance spaces showcasing diverse artistic voices, from the roar of Division I athletics to intimate learning communities where every perspective enriches the discussion.

## About DeKalb

DeKalb, Illinois, named after the Revolutionary War hero Johann de Kalb, is a city with a rich history and a strong connection to agriculture and education. Known as "Barb City" for its pioneering role in barbed wire production, DeKalb's legacy also includes significant contributions to hybrid corn development. Located about 65 miles west of Chicago, DeKalb also serves as a hub for various industries and boasts a vibrant community with diverse neighborhoods, a rich cultural scene, and 44 parks and recreation facilities. The city also hosts the annual Corn Fest and is home to the historic Egyptian Theatre, built in 1929. The city's blend of history, educational institutions, industry, and recreational opportunities contribute to a high quality of life for its approximately 40,000 residents.



*Downtown DeKalb features shops and restaurants along the historic Lincoln Highway (top). The Egyptian Theater (middle) regularly hosts classic movies and cultural events. The Ellwood House and Visitor Center (bottom) houses an art gallery and museum, and hosts events like summer concerts.*

## About our diocese

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago offers a dynamic and diverse landscape for ministry, stretching across northern Illinois—from the shores of Lake Michigan to the banks of the Mississippi River, from the Wisconsin border to Peoria and beyond. With 114 congregations in urban, suburban, and rural communities, the diocese offers a rich variety of contexts in which to live out one's calling.



*The Rt. Rev. Clark, Bishop of Chicago, visiting with our organist Kathleen Johnson after celebrating the Holy Eucharist with us.*

Clergy in new calls are supported through the Fresh Start program, designed to ease transitions, and foster strong foundations and collegial relationships. Opportunities for connection and renewal, including the annual Clergy Retreat and the Chrism Mass, bring clergy together for worship, fellowship, and shared purpose. The diocese invests in leadership development through the College for Congregational Development, lay leadership programs, and the Certified Church

Treasurer initiative—ensuring that clergy and laity are equipped to lead thriving, resilient congregations.

Under the leadership of the Right Reverend Paula E. Clark, the diocese is embracing a strategic planning process that uses data to guide mission focus and resource allocation. Episcopal Charities and diocesan commissions, committees, and taskforces are actively engaged in outreach, education, and advocacy. The diocese is consciously moving toward becoming a more adaptive environment for ministry.

To apply for this position, please complete The Clergy Information Form for Transitions from the Diocesan website:

[episcopalchicago.wufoo.com/forms/m1poxgz40cwsj2w/](http://episcopalchicago.wufoo.com/forms/m1poxgz40cwsj2w/)

Questions about this position should be directed to The Reverend Canon Andrea Mysen, Canon to the Ordinary: [amysen@episcopalchicago.org](mailto:amysen@episcopalchicago.org)