



The Diocese of Springfield

# E-NEWSLETTER

September 2025 - The Week of XII Pentecost

*Angelic Hierarchy in Christianity, St Michael and All Angels', Somerton, Wikimedia Commons*

## St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Oldest Surviving Church Building in Pekin

*By Jared L. Olar - Local History Program Coordinator at the Pekin Public Library*

Built 151 years ago, St. Paul's Episcopal Church at the corner of Buena Vista and Washington streets holds the honor of being the oldest surviving church building in Pekin.

The church, built in Victorian Neo-Gothic style, serves a parish whose origin reaches back to 19 Nov. 1837, not even eight years after the platting and naming of Pekin, when the Rev. William Douglas, an Episcopalian missionary priest, served as rector of Christ Church Parish in Tremont and traveled between Tremont and Pekin to minister to three communicants.



*View of the sanctuary and nave of St. Paul's Episcopal Church during the 1890s, from "Pekin and Environs," probably taken by Pekin pioneer photographer Henry Hobart Cole.*

## UPCOMING:

- 9/08 - The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 9/13 - The Feast of Saint Cyprian of Carthage
- 9/15 - Holy Cross Day
- 9/16 - The Feast of Saint Ninian
- 9/17 - The Feast of Saint Hildegard of Bingen
- 9/18 - The Feast of Saint Edward Bouverie Pusey
- 9/22 - The Feast of Saint Matthew the Apostle
- 9/23 - The Feast of Saint Thecla of Iconium
- 9/29 - The Feast of Saint Michael and All Angels
- 9/30 - The Feast of Saint Jerome



*Photo of St. Paul's Episcopal Church from the early 1900s, before the excavation of the church's undercroft.*

In 1850, about the same time that the county seat was moved from Tremont back to Pekin, the Episcopal parish in Tremont relocated to Pekin, and in June 1851 the parish was formally admitted to the convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Illinois. In those early days, Pekin's Episcopalians gathered for worship at various locations, but by 1861 their house of worship was a small schoolhouse on the south side of Elizabeth Street, at the site now occupied by the Marshall Building. Later the schoolhouse/church was moved to the southwest corner of Broadway and Buena Vista, and that served as St. Paul's Church until the consecration of the present St. Paul's.

\$1,200 and the laying of the church's foundation. It took four more years before the congregation could erect the church at a cost of \$6,500, and then another two years before the debt could be paid off so the church could be consecrated. The whole cost was raised through the members' donations, except for \$1,000 that came from the sale of the old church and lot at the corner of Broadway and Buena Vista. The formal consecration of the church took place on 22 March 1876. At the time, St. Paul's had 44 communicants.

In the latter 1800s, St. Paul's Episcopal Church had a parochial school, known as the Cathedral School, on South Capitol Street. The school, which operated out of the former home of Reuben Bergstresser and the Cohrs family, was located at the present site of Jefferson School. The Cathedral School was established by the Rev. George West, who became parish rector in 1882.

During the years from 1903 to 1909, the church's undercroft was excavated and a steam boiler and electricity were installed in the church, while a rectory to provide a residence for the parish rector and his family also was built on the west side of the church. In 1947, a legacy from the late parishioner Anna Blenkiron (who had also arranged for the creation of Blenkiron Park, the

Preparations for the construction of a new church at the opposite end of Buena Vista began in 1870 with the purchase of the lot for



*One of St. Paul's Episcopal Church's older pieces of liturgical furnishings, the eagle lectern.*



“tot lot” at the corner of Park Ave. and Sixth Street) enabled the parish to do an extensive remodel and improvement of the church’s interior.

In 1962, St. Paul’s built a two-story, 14-classroom education building on the lot adjacent to the church on the north side. The building bears the Latin name “Spiritus Gladius,” which means “Sword of the Spirit,” a reference to the Word of God which the Bible likens to a two-edged sword. The building was a preschool learning center in the early 1970s. In 1986, two of the classrooms were set aside to become the All Souls memorial chapel and columbarium. During the week, daily services take place in All Souls Chapel. About two years after the creation of the chapel, memorial gardens were added to the church property. The exteriors of the church and rectory underwent a remodel, refurbishing, and repainting in 1996.

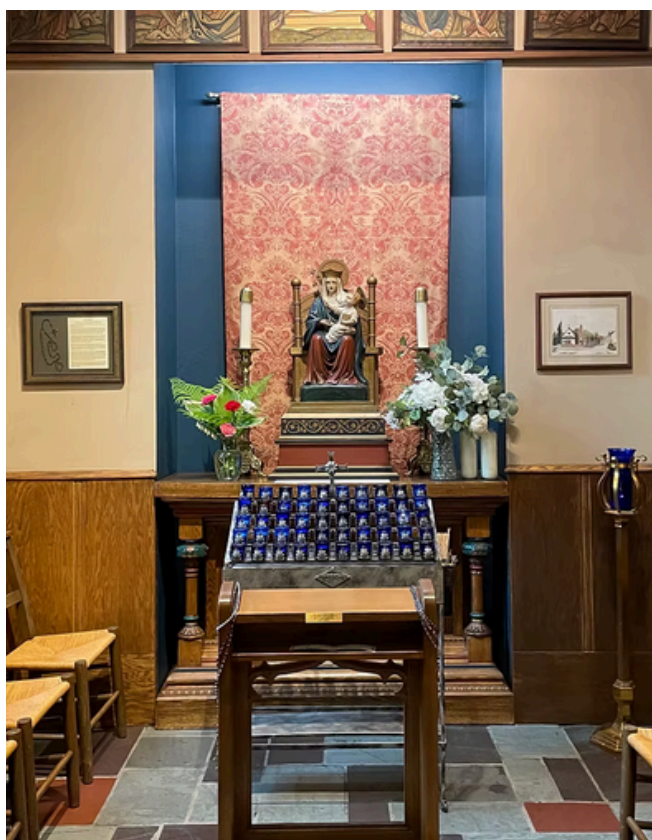
The most recent visible change to St. Paul’s campus was the demolition of the old rectory just a few years ago.

Today the church, a part of the wider Anglican Communion, is a part of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield, which was formed in 1877 from the tripartite division of the old Diocese of Illinois. The congregation is served by the Rev. Jonathan M. Butcher, who is also the pastor of the All Saints Episcopal Church in Morton. St. Paul’s current vestry members are Jacob Brisbin, senior warden, Ann Bacon, junior warden, Pam Breeland, Michael Copelen, and Sharon Robinson. The parish’s oldest communicant is Harriet Harris, age 104, who is also the past long-time parish treasurer.

To continue reading and for more pictures, visit <https://pekinpubliclibrary.org/st-pauls-episcopal-church-oldest-surviving-church-building-in-pekin/>



*A vintage Konisek photograph, taken in 1933, of a guild of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church women, with the parish rector, Father Frederick S. Arvedson standing at the middle top of the photo. Rev. Arvedson’s wife is seated in the first row at the far right.*



## Annual Pilgrimage to the Proto-Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

The Diocese of Springfield is invited to join the Society of Mary's Annual meeting during the Annual Pilgrimage to the American Proto-Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Events will extend from October 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>, featuring the daily office, guided tours, led meditations, and the Procession of the Image of Our Lady of Walsingham with Pontifical Mass. Bishop Burgess will be offering a meditation and presiding over Friday's Solemn Evensong. For more information on the pilgrimage, [click here](#). To learn more about the Proto-Shrine, [click here](#).

## Sewanee Certificate of Advanced Study Program

Sewanee School of Theology has launched a Certificate of Advanced Study program for those who have already completed the MDiv degree, with one certificate offered in preaching and the other in liturgy. This program is designed for clergy who are seeking advanced coursework alongside students in the Doctor of Ministry program. Students participate in two summers of in-person study with other D.Min. students and take four courses without completing a thesis. Upon completion of any four courses, students may receive a certificate or apply to be admitted into the D.Min. program for further study. Students admitted into the D.Min. program will transfer their credit from the certificate into the program. For more information, [click here](#).



# National Cursillo Conference at Toddhall Retreat & Conference Center

The Cursillo Ministry in the Diocese of Springfield will host the national conference of the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry in late October. Cursillo leaders from all over the country will gather at Toddhall Retreat and Conference Center (<https://www.toddhallretreat.org/>) Wednesday evening through Saturday noon, October 29th through November 1st. The theme of the conference will be *A Homecoming of the Episcopal Cursillo Family* – a time to celebrate, connect, share, and look ahead in God’s wonderful tapestry of Cursillo. This is a wonderful opportunity for members of our diocese to interact with Cursillo leaders and enjoy a wide range of interesting topics. It is also a chance for us to showcase what God is doing in the Cursillo ministry in Springfield. Workshops include:

- *Great Ideas to Keep the 4th Day Energized*
- *Two Day Cursillo Weekends*
- *Sacred Cows and Colorful Programs – A Framework to Review Weekends*
- *Endowment Support to Local Cursillo*
- *Thinking Outside the Box – How to Creatively Fill Needs*
- *Spiritual Direction – What It Can Do For You*

This may be the last time in the next many years this conference will be in the Midwest, making it an opportune time to attend the conference without significant travel expenses. Local Cursillistas that serve on the team do not pay a conference fee. To volunteer for the local support team, contact Bob Vaughn ([bobvaughn8@gmail.com](mailto:bobvaughn8@gmail.com)). For more details about the conference itself, visit <https://episcopalcursilloministry.org/2025-conference/>.



## Episcopal Parish of Alton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dawgs 4 Paws

Join the Episcopal Parish of Alton on Sunday October 5th from 2:00 - 4:00pm for an afternoon of pet blessings, food, live music, silent auction, and so much more! Great Rivers Animal Hospital will be offering a limited number of free rabies vaccinations during the events for pets.





## The Living Church Liturgy & Arts Conference

The Living Church will be hosting a liturgy and arts conference this coming November at the Episcopal Church of St. Michael and St. George, St. Louis. This three-day event will feature engaging talks, shared meals, and corporate worship, with an optional film screening in the city on Saturday evening. The conference seeks to explore questions like, “how do beauty and liturgy shape us for life with God?” and “what does the beauty of the liturgy have to do with “real” life?” The Diocese of Springfield is invited to join in learning how the sacraments and sacred rhythms, illuminated by the riches of art, literature, music, and history, draw us into the transforming presence of the One who is true, good, and beautiful.

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## Mt. Carmel Putnam Grant

The people and vestry of St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Mt. Carmel are pleased to announce a grant opportunity for the missions and parishes of our diocese. This grant is funded through the generosity of the Putnam Family Trust—faithful Episcopalians and Mt. Carmelites. This grant is designed to support parishes and missions in one of three ways: through community mission, building and grounds, and evangelism and church growth. Those interested in applying can reach out to Fr. Mike Clark at [fathermikesjtb@gmail.com](mailto:fathermikesjtb@gmail.com) to receive an application.

## Office Position Open at St. Matthew's

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Bloomington is looking to hire a part-time office administrator for 15 hours per week. An hourly wage of \$15-\$17 will be offered depending on experience and proficiencies. Those interested may submit their references and resume, including education, work experience, and skills, to [rector@stmattsblm.org](mailto:rector@stmattsblm.org)



## Educational Supplies Needed at St. John's

St. John's Episcopal Church in Decatur is beginning a Christian Education program for early learners (ages 2 to approximately 8). This program will utilize a lot of Montessori supplies similar to those found in the Godly Play Foundation Curriculum. Specifically, they are in need of art supplies, books, learning and educational toys, and any Montessori-based learning items. If you have any items that you would like to donate, contact Emily Cole at 217-412-9338 to coordinate pick up in the Decatur area.

## Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat Date Reminder

This is a reminder to all clergy to mark your calendars for the 2026 Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat, hosted at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Snows in Belleville, IL. Due to limited availability at the retreat center, this year's retreat will be held Wednesday afternoon through Friday lunch the week before Ash Wednesday (February 11, 12 and 13) instead of the typical Monday afternoon through Wednesday lunch schedule. Please mark your calendars now in preparation to join.

Please include those in our Diocese who are pursuing Holy Orders in your prayers:

Danny Shuler, Postulant, St. Thomas, Salem  
Andrew Mead, Postulant, Trinity, Lincoln  
Zach Buscher, Postulant, Trinity, Lincoln  
Jeff Wenzel, Postulant, The Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Springfield  
Len Harris, Postulant, Church of the Redeemer, Cairo

You can visit our website to check out the most up-to-date prayer calendar ([click here](#)) or our diocesan calendar ([click here](#)) with feasts and other events listed for around the Diocese.



*The Calling of Saint Matthew, A.N. Mironov, Wikimedia Commons*



The Episcopal Church in Central and Southern Illinois

