



Parish Office: 304 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
(320) 352-2196
parishesontheprairie.org

Weekend Mass Schedules

Saturday

4:00 p.m. St. Paul's, Sauk Centre
6:00 p.m. Our Lady of the Angels
Sauk Centre
8:00 p.m. Sts. Peter & Paul, Elrosa

Sunday

8:00 a.m. Our Lady of the Angels,
Sauk Centre
8:15 a.m. St. Alexis, West Union
10:30 a.m. St. Francis de Sales,
Belgrade
10:30 a.m. St. Paul's, Sauk Centre

See our website for a full listing
of daily Mass & confession times.

Soennecker from front

"Everything surrounding me in my day was Catholic, and it brought me a lot of joy and peace."

In 2011, Fr. Kevin went to daily Mass before starting his 8 a.m. shift in Albany and sat by himself in the back of the church. During the consecration, he heard a voice saying, "This will be you one day."

"That was when my whole life changed," Fr. Kevin said. "I had to really pray about if I really heard that, if that was real, what that meant. That moment never went away. ... The pull to the priesthood got stronger, and I knew that, if I wanted to take the Lord seriously, I'd have to do His will and call the vocations director."

After years of prayer, he applied and was accepted as a seminarian by the Diocese of St. Cloud in 2017, continuing his study at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul. He did not anticipate staying in the seminary for long, but God had other plans.

"As much I wanted to do the Lord's will, I didn't want to do the Lord's will because I knew it was going to require me to sell all I had (and) go back to school for seven years," Fr. Kevin said. "You try to talk yourself out of it because the Lord allows you to do that. ... The Lord was opening up every door; (I thought) 'As soon as I come up to one locked door, I'm done,' but he (God) really guided everything."

Fr. Kevin was ordained June 1, 2024, and celebrated his first Mass in St. Paul's Church in Sauk Centre. He was assigned as a parochial vicar to the Centered on Christ ACC, consisting of parishes in Cold Spring, Jacobs Prairie, Richmond and Rockville. There, he found it a blessing to begin serving to people as a priest.

"God is trying to touch every single life, and to be the priest is to bring God to the person who is in need or who is longing for some peace in their life," Fr. Kevin said. "There are definitely some moments where you see the heaviness of life in those moments, but God is bigger than those heavy moments."

The ACC also has a couple of Catholic schools, and it was another source

of joy for Fr. Kevin to minister to the students.

In early May, Fr. Kevin received the call from Bishop Patrick Neary that he was being assigned as the new pastor of the Parishes on the Prairie ACC. At first, he thought he had misheard the bishop, but he was happy to be returning to the Sauk Centre area.

Fr. Kevin also knew Fr. Mark Botzet in the seminary.

"He's one of my good priest friends in the diocese," Fr. Kevin said. "We both look forward to working with each other."

While Fr. Kevin is eager to be back in his hometown, he is dedicated to providing equally attentive care to the churches in Belgrade, Brooten, Elrosa and West Union.

"A soul is a soul in my book," he said. "We're all in need and in search of God, ... I'm an example of the kindness and mercy of God; as long as we continue to put one foot in front of the other, God can make your life complete. I want to share that joy and the experience I went through with parishioners in the ACC."

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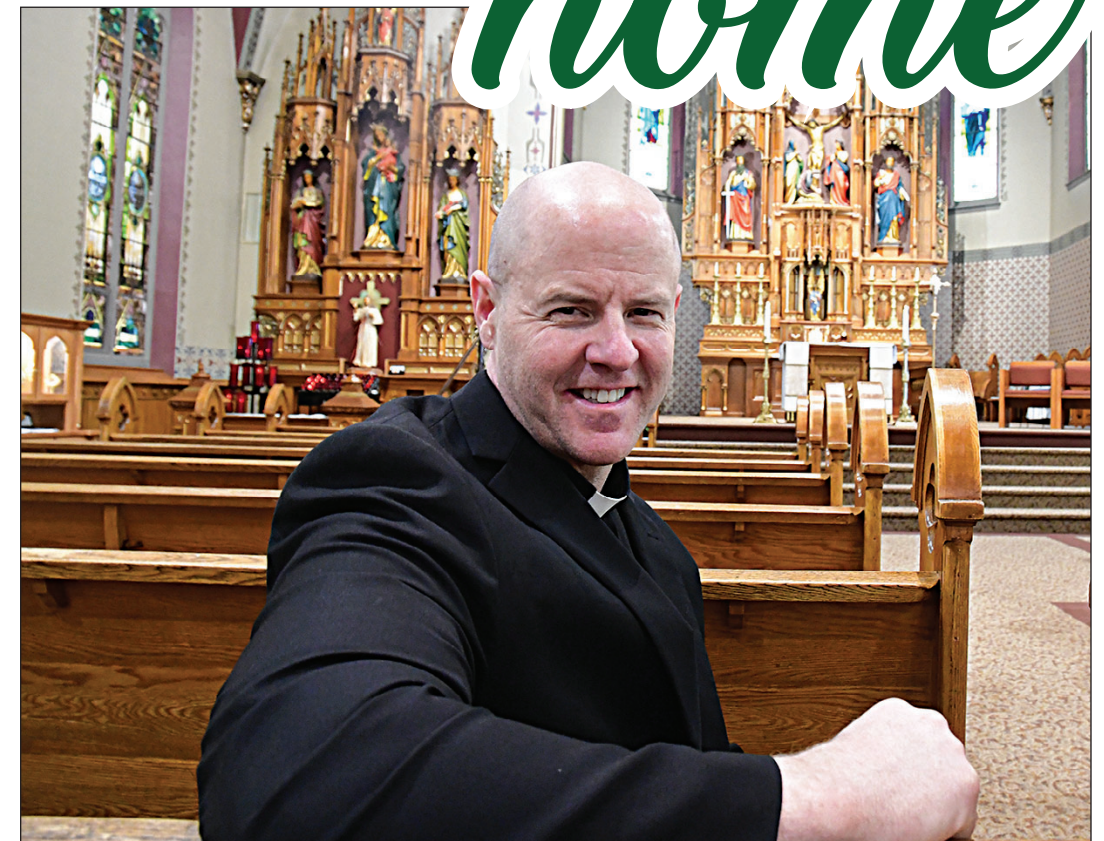
JUNE 2025

Watch
for your next
bi-monthly
newsletter at the
beginning
of August

ONE FLOCK • ONE SHEPHERD

God's road leads

home



Father Kevin Soennecker

Soennecker installed as ACC pastor

Father Kevin Soennecker's new pastoral assignment is not entirely new to him. As the Sauk Centre native returns to his childhood churches, he is preparing to serve not only his hometown but the entire Parishes on the Prairie Area Catholic Community.

"To be able to bring the grace that God offers that individual is something that brings me a lot of joy," Fr. Kevin said.

The son of Jerome and Alice, Fr. Kevin was raised in Sauk Centre, educated first at Holy Family School and later at Sauk Centre Public Schools. He went on to earn a marketing degree from Alexandria Technical & Community College before working in the grocery industry for 30 years.

During this time, Fr. Kevin was in a long-term relationship, but they

decided to call it off. He then dove deeper into understanding his faith to understand where God was calling him — going to daily Mass and Adoration, reading the Bible and Catechism, and looking into other Catholic media.

"I often found my television being tuned into EWTN and my radio to Relevant Radio," Fr. Kevin said.

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Cheerful helper

Rick retires as faith formation secretary

After a decade of working for St. Paul's Church in Sauk Centre and the Parishes on the Prairie Area Catholic Community, Sue Rick has retired from her role as faith formation secretary.

"It's been really exciting, with this becoming an ACC," Sue said. "From where I've started to where it is now, it's so beautiful to see everyone working together, trying to help the church educate the young, be there for the older and really be a good, cohesive group."

John and Sue Rick moved to Sauk Centre in 2006 and became parishioners of Our Lady of the Angels Church; their previous parish was St. Nicholas Catholic Church in Carver. They had three children at the time, and because they had been going to a religion class in Carver, Sue started looking for another one in Sauk Centre and was directed toward Kathy Knoblach for youth formation.

"She was one of the first people, outside of my immediate neighbors, who I met in town," Sue said. "We connected right away, and she was shocked; in the many years she'd been doing youth ministry, nobody had ever said they wanted to see where their kids were going to have religion class."

Later, Sue was able to provide daycare services for Knoblach and some other friends. When the 2015 school year started and the children were gone, she wanted something else to do and found a parish bulletin ad for the faith



formation secretary position, so she applied, interviewed and was accepted.

Sue worked on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with Wednesday being the busier day of the week with students coming for classes.

"I basically did what anybody told me to do, if it was making copies or if it was making sure the rooms had enough seats for everybody or if it was running to the store to make sure there were enough snacks for everybody," she

said. "It was a very collaborative atmosphere, a lot of discussion. ... We would talk about ideas for how to make lessons relevant or all sorts of stuff."

Other duties included doing mailings and keeping the faith formation database up to date.

When Sue started, she was working out of the former convent building next to St. Paul's Church in Sauk Centre.

"That was kind of cool because we moved our office

into the old Eucharistic chapel, and I sat where Jesus was," she said. "I felt very safe and loved it, but it was an old building, and there was a lot of hauling (materials) to Holy Family School; we'd have to bring all of our supplies."

When the former Minnesota National Bank building was donated to St. Paul's in late 2018 and refurbished into the Centre for Christ, Sue was happy to move into the new space, which could host programs for elementary through high school students as well as youth group events, Grief-Share, men's and women's groups, Vacation Bible School, Totus Tuus and more.

"That was a real game-changer to have everything under one roof," Sue said. "Everything was right where we needed it."

Sue enjoyed so much about the faith formation secretary position that it was hard for her to pick a favorite thing about it.

"There was so much about that job I really enjoyed," she said. "I never felt like a peon; I just did the odd jobs. I liked getting to know the people at the parish office, I liked getting to know folks at Holy Family School, ... (and) I liked being behind the scenes."

John retired in October 2024 after working as a plant manager in Alexandria, and so Sue decided it was time for her to retire as well, allowing Mary Mohs to step into the role.

"(John) was very happy to retire, but he's also a real worker," Sue said. "I truly did not think he was actually going to retire; he kept telling me, 'You should retire because I'm retiring.'"

Rick page 7

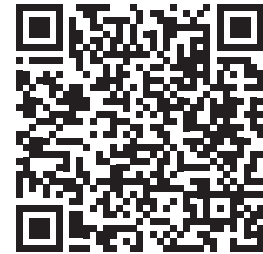
UPDATING HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Over the years, many people have changed phone numbers, emails and mailing addresses. We are still in the process of updating all our parish membership records in order to better serve and communicate with you.

It is vital for us to have correct

contact information. It will not be sold, and it will only be used within our Church.

If you haven't already, please take a moment to update your information using the QR code provided. If you've recently done this, thank you for doing so!



THE DIVINE MERCY BILLBOARD

For about a decade, the Divine Mercy billboard in Sauk Centre has been a blessing to Interstate 94 and its travelers. The signage, originally spearheaded by Jim Korkoski from Alexandria, has been entrusted to the care of the Sauk Centre Knights of Columbus.

The current billboard has been up for five years and needs replacing. Our fundraising goal is \$10,000,

as the sign's annual rent is \$6,000 and it costs \$2,000 to commission the new sign; the additional \$2,000 would be set aside in case the billboard is damaged by hail or other causes.

Every dollar helps, which is why we are also taking online donations and would greatly appreciate whatever you can give.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Fr. Todd Schneider 40th Anniversary Mass

Monday, June 2

Location: St. Paul's Church

Time: Mass of Thanksgiving 10:30 a.m., reception to follow in Church basement.

Fr. Todd was ordained June 1, 1985, and he will be celebrating his 40th anniversary of his first Mass. All are invited to celebrate with him!

First Saturday Devotions:

Saturday, June 7

Our Lady of Angels

Confession: 7:45 a.m.

Adoration: 8 a.m.

Rosary: 8:30 a.m.

Mass: 9 a.m.

Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, June 10

Location: St. Paul's Church basement

Time: Rosary at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.

Baptism Class

Wednesday, June 18

Location: St. Paul's Church meeting room.

Time: 7 p.m.

If you are expecting your first child or it has been over three years since you last attended the class, please call our parish office to register.

ACC Outdoor Mass & Picnic

Sunday, June 29

Location: Sts. Peter & Paul in Elrosa

Time: Outdoor Mass 10:30 a.m., picnic events 12-5 p.m.

Solemnity of Sts. Peter & Paul

Sunday, June 29

First Saturday Devotions:

Saturday, July 5

Our Lady of Angels

Confession: 7:45 a.m.

Adoration: 8 a.m.

Rosary: 8:30 a.m.

Mass: 9 a.m.

Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, July 8

Location: St. Paul's Church basement

Time: Rosary at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.

Feast Day of St. Alexis

Thursday, July 17

Rick

from page 2

His dream was to retire and work at a Home Depot or some hardware place, and I said, 'Give it three months, and you're a manager,' but he actually retired. He's not working, so it is time for me to join him in retirement."

Now that it is summertime, Sue and John plan to spend more time on the lake, finish home projects and entertain more company. Their family, including two grandchildren, lives all over the nation, so they also want to travel.

As she steps away from her desk at the Centre for Christ, Sue is taking with her the experiences and helpful outlook which served her well in the ACC.

"My attitude was always to be a cheerful helper," Sue said. "There are all different needs among your coworkers and among the families who are there, so just be open and accepting and helpful and loving."

Meet, greet, eat

Parish picnic from page 3

Diane has also seen how popular bingo can get. “It’s a good addition,” she said. “People like to go down there, and they can sit and talk and win money.” No tickets or reservations are required, and the picnic welcomes family and friends of other faiths as well if they are interested in joining. “You can come at your leisure, and the hours are hopefully accommodating for people who do have to work,” Diane said. “We all know maybe a lot of people from our own parishes, but this is an opportunity for all the parishes to mingle. ... We can all get together to celebrate being Catholic.” And, there is one way everyone in the ACC can help with the picnic in advance: Pray the weather is nice that day. “We just want to unify all the parishes,” Robert said. “We’re all in the same boat together, one big happy family.”

Sts. Peter and Paul plans for fourth annual parish picnic

Saints Peter and Paul Church in Elrosa is holding its fourth annual picnic on their church’s patronal feast day, bringing back an outdoor Mass, food, games and music for the entire Parishes on the Prairie Area Catholic Community. Now, all that is needed is good weather and parishioners ready to reunite with old friends and meet new ones.

Diane and Robert Landberg, parishioners at St. Paul’s Church in Sauk Centre, have chaired the parish picnic for several years. The picnic on the saints’ feast day was the idea of Father Rick Aubol, and it was first headed by Danny Borgerding.

“He laid all the groundwork,” Diane said. “We had just moved out here; we’d been living here for six months, and Father Greg (Paffel) calls us and says, ‘Hey, I’ve got a great job for you guys.’ ... I’m like, ‘Father, we just moved down here. We only know three people.’ He said, ‘It’s a great way to meet people,’ and he was absolutely correct. We’ve had a ball doing this, and we’ve gotten to know so many wonderful people our ACC has.”

This year’s parish picnic will be Sunday, June 29, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, from noon to 5 p.m., following the 10:30 a.m. outdoor Mass on the church grounds; Mass attendees are asked to bring their own lawn chairs. If it rains, the Mass will be held inside Sts. Peter and Paul.

Lunch will consist of pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, baked beans, chips, beer, and locally-sourced white and chocolate milk. The Sauk Cen-



Diane and Robert Landberg

“We’ve had a ball doing this, and we’ve gotten to know so many wonderful people our ACC has.”

- Diane Landberg, parishioner at St. Paul’s Church in Sauk Centre

tre and Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Knights of Columbus councils will also be providing

root beer floats. The pulled pork is made by a local smokemaster.

“People have come from the Twin Cities area to sample (the sandwiches),” Diane said.

Woodsman Axe from Alexandria will be returning to the picnic this year with their trailer with targets for axe throwing. Randy Olson with the Bonanza Valley Voice will also be lending his bean bags and boards for cornhole, and Kathy Knoblach, ACC direction of faith formation and outreach, will organize games and activities for the youth.

“(Knoblach) does a wonderful job with lawn games and prizes,” Diane said. “They will have a climbing wall again; they’ll do face painting again, and they will have a small bouncy house.”

The picnic has always had live music to go with the festivities, and this year, it will be provided by local band Mid-Flight.

In the church basement, the Christian Women’s Council of Elrosa will be hosting bingo.

“That usually turns out to be standing room only,” Robert said.

Parish picnic page 8



First COMMUNION

May the peace of Christ fill
your heart today and always.



St. Alexis



Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa



Our Lady of the Angels



St. Paul's Church



St. Paul's Church



Our Lady of the Angels Church



St. Paul's Church



St. Paul's Church