

St. Philip Invitation



LIVE LIKE THAT - LOVE, FEED, SERVE DECEMBER 2020

Congregational Meeting

Mark your calendars for the congregational meeting on Sunday, December 6 at 9:30am via Zoom.com video conference. (Please note the change in time and venue from November's newsletter). To access the meeting go to www.zoom.com and enter meeting i.d. 860 4019 9836. The passcode is 24019. You do not need a computer or internet to join! Just call into the meeting from your landline or cell phone at 13017158592. At the prompt use the meeting i.d. and passcode above.

There will be a brief update as to the ministry we share in and through St. Philip. Additionally, we will be voting on the annual spending plan as well as elections for St. Philip's Council. It is important for all of us to be a part of our church's mission and the resources needed to make it happen. Please make plans to be present.

Indoor Worship Postponed

Pastor David and Pastor Laura

At the November 10 meeting of the St. Philip Church Council, the leadership body voted to postpone a return to indoor worship.

This decision was not made lightly, as numerous communications have already gone out and preparations had been made for the planned November 15 return date. Unfortunately, since council met and approved the November 15 plan at the October meeting, the coronavirus situation in our Roanoke area has changed. Roanoke and much of Southwest Virginia are now "hot spots," and our local positivity rates are now running between 10-12%. Roanoke Memorial Hospital has its highest numbers of Covid19 patients yet and now has two floors dedicated to treating Covid patients.

This was a weighty decision. Council is aware that every single one of us longs to be back to worshipping in the sanctuary. We are certainly all feeling the frustration, fatigue, and sadness of not being able to gather in our traditional ways. But, we are called to care for our St. Philip community and our neighborhood community and gathering in groups in an enclosed space, even briefly, risks those we love. Again, this decision was not made lightly. We - your pastors and your church council - very much miss worshipping as we did prior to this pandemic season. We miss you and eagerly await the time when we can gather again!

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, remember always that we continue to be a community of faith. Our mission has not and does not stop - we will always seek to Live Like That, like Jesus, as we love, feed, and serve. At this time, we plan to continue to worship in creative ways using our online resources and conference calls, as well drive-up options. While worship brings us much comfort and joy, worship is primarily about God, who is the audience. So while worshipping in these formats may not be our preference, we are indeed still giving thanks and praise to God. If you have not yet connected with the worship options available, we do encourage you to do so.

As we continue through this season, feelings of isolation and loneliness are so prevalent. We all very much need each other and ask you to connect with one another. The St. Philip family is such a gift and we encourage you to check in with one another. We, your pastors, also want to connect with you and encourage you to connect with us. Most importantly, as challenges and disappointments are prevalent, remember always you are not alone. Nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

December Worship Schedule

- Drive-up Worship, Dec. 13 @9:30am
- Online Worship & Conference call Every Sunday @11am at <https://stphiliplutheran.online.church>
- Christmas Eve Worship Outdoors @7pm and Zoom Online @9pm
Fellowship will begin at 8:30pm
(www.zoom.com, Meeting i.d.: 875 0473 1483, Passcode: 24019)



Celebrating Christmas

Pastor Laura

At its heart, Christmas is a celebration of the wondrous power of God's love breaking into the weary world through the birth of a savior. Christmas is a celebration of hope, of joy! It's a celebration we await with hopeful expectation every year, but perhaps with even more longing this year.

While it may not be exactly as years past this year, St. Philip will joyfully celebrate the coming of our savior again this Christmas Eve. There will be two different opportunities for worship. Please make plans to attend!

At 7:00pm there will be a Community Candlelight Celebration on the lawn

beside the church. The whole Roanoke community is invited to come for a short service where folks will hear the Christmas story and sing Silent Night by candlelight. This will be an outdoor, masked, and socially distant event.

Then, at 9:00pm, join on Zoom for a live Christmas Eve worship service. This service will look more familiar to a traditional Christmas Eve service and will be accessible through computer or phone. The Zoom gathering will open at 8:30pm to allow for a half hour of fellowship before the service begins. To access the meeting go to www.zoom.com and enter meeting i.d. 875 0473 1483. The passcode is 24019. Please You do not need a computer or internet to join! Just call

into the meeting from your landline or cell phone at 13017158592. At the prompt use the meeting i.d. and passcode above.



On December 27, the congregation will celebrate the First Sunday of Christmas with a service of Lessons and Carols. This service will be shared in our typical digital and conference call formats.

While it may look different than we're used to, celebrations this year will be as joyful and meaningful as ever. Please make plans to attend worship at St. Philip.

Wear Your Christmas Best



Now is your chance to break out your favorite Christmas outfit. Let Pastor David know via email at pastordavid@stphiliplutheran.net or by telephone (540-366-7046) if you would like to be a part of a video

compilation similar to the waving of palms prior to Easter.

The pastors will put together a schedule to make a quick stop by your home the week of December 14 to video you in your Christmas Best whether that is your best dress or suit, your favorite Christmas sweater, or your pajamas.

Be creative in whatever way you want.

Either Pastor Laura or Pastor David will give you a call and ask you to come outside your front door to celebrate Christmas in this way and to see each other face to face. Please let Pastor David know by December 9 if you would like to participate.



Live Like That

St. Philip is a community of disciples who truly seek to live out God's calling in the world. Even as we have had to be more creative and use safe practices, we Live Like That, like Christ, loving, feeding, and serving. You are an important part of that mission!

In the middle of a pandemic, St. Philip seeks to be God's instruments of grace. We, along with community partners, serve hungry children in our community through Elijah's Backpack.

Currently 50 children and their families are a part of this ministry. Though we can not accommodate more volunteers for Elijah's Backpack at this time, do consider making a financial donation to this essential ministry. Thank you!!

In the middle of a pandemic, adopted foster children (Cody and Omara) were showered with gifts from their Christmas wish list. Thank you!!

In the middle of a pandemic, St. Philip continues to be a primary resource stocking the St. Mark Lutheran Food

Pantry. Thank you!!

In the middle of a pandemic, St. Philip served a Feast at Thanksgiving (see page 3) Thank you!!

In the middle of a pandemic, St. Philip worships together, forms faith, gathers youth together, prays and cares for each other because we are a part of the body of Christ and the church never closes. Thank you!!

Remember you are called to be a disciple of Christ - to Live Like That.

A Taxing Topic

As this very difficult year comes to an end each of you is invited to continue to be generous as you are able so that ministry thrives.

In tax year 2017 about 30% of taxpayers itemized deductions. As a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017, it is estimated that only about 8% of filers will itemize deductions for tax year 2018. The TCJA suspended the personal exemption, which was worth \$4050 per person in 2017, and increased the standard deduction to \$12,000 for individuals and \$24,000 for married couples. The TCJA also placed caps

on, and in some instances eliminated, items which could be claimed on Schedule A Itemized Deductions.

Thankfully the Act provided a means for some filers to make tax free contributions to charitable groups without itemizing deductions. The TCJA permits individuals between the ages of 70.5 and 86 to make a tax free distribution from a traditional IRA to a qualified 501c3 organization such as a church.

Any amount given to the church will count toward the IRA's annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and it will not be included in taxable income. The Act requires that

the funds go directly from the financial source managing the IRA to the church. Funds can be rolled from a 401k plan to an IRA and then transferred to the church. For more details about this option contact the financial advisor who manages the IRA account. I would also recommend that those who may benefit from this option seek advice from their CPA, Enrolled Agent or tax preparer.

We have had several St. Philipians take advantage of this opportunity this year and invite you to consider making an offering to our shared ministry in this way.

Church Council News – November 2020

Linda Duncan Rhodes

Council met on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

Peter Shick, Treasurer reports receipts for month ending October 31, 2020 of \$14,502.09, and year-to-date receipts of \$204,227.21. Year-to-date giving is down approximately \$20,000. Mr. Shick attributes this to COVID.

Expenses in October were \$24,856.63, and year-to-date expenses are \$197,458.90. Even though giving is down Mr. Shick anticipates finishing the year in the black. Investments are doing well.

The pastors and Council discussed concerns due to the rise in COVID cases and the return to indoors worship to resume on Sunday, November 15. Council voted to postpone the return to indoors worship at this time due to the

rise in COVID cases. On-line and drive-up worship service will continue.

Council approved the 2021 Spending Plan to be presented to the congregation. A congregational meeting has been set for December 6 at 9:30am via Zoom teleconferencing to approve the 2021 Spending Plan and Elections to Council.

The next council meeting will be held on December 8 via Zoom.

Thrivent Action Teams

Attention Thrivent members! (This is anyone who owns a Thrivent financial product – if you are not sure if you are a member speak to Max Holland) Did you know that as a Thrivent member you have access to \$250 of seed money for community service activities? Called Thrivent Action Teams, this program is a wonderful gift Thrivent shares with our faith community!

There is an online form to complete that is very short. It asks for a name of your event, a short paragraph on who it will benefit and what you intend to purchase, and then asks if you need thank you letters and marketing/advertisement types of things from Thrivent. It takes maybe five minutes to complete. They approve your request and then send you a packet with the items you have asked for and \$250 gift card for you to utilize. We do our event, and write back to them about its success. It is really that

simple.

And as Thrivent members we get to do this twice a year! It is not too late for you to take advantage of this opportunity to put together a team with some seed money for your project before the end of the year.

If you would like to put something together but need some ideas to prime the pump call one of the Pastors for suggestions.

Feast at Philip's Thank You!

While the pandemic has impacted so many events and traditions this year, the pastors and Feast Team are so grateful that St. Philip was able to host Feast at Philip's again this year! Meals were only served to-go style to help ensure the safety of volunteers and guests. St. Philip served meals

throughout the Roanoke Valley, including to the Roanoke City Police, Melrose Towers, fire stations, North Roanoke Assisted Living, Lansdowne and other housing communities. We were also fortunate this year to partner with Trinity Lutheran Church and through their Helping Hands Ministry distributed meals from Trinity to community members in need, as well.

Every year, the Feast takes a village of organizers, volunteers, and donors to be a success! Thank you, thank you! Over 600 meals were delivered. What a powerful testament to God's love and grace that we were able to serve the community at such a time as this. We give thanks to God for the servant hearts of this congregation and the Holy Spirit continually calling us to mission!

Faith Formation News

Kids will continue with Spark activity pages and Story and Song videos for faith formation in December. Check out the St. Philip facebook page or website on Sunday mornings to access the videos! If you're looking for a great Bible to give a child in your life this Christmas, the pastors recommend The Spark Story Bible for younger readers: <https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9780806670492/Spark-Story-Bible-Sunday-School-Edition> and the Spark Bible NRSV for upper elementary kids: <https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9780806670485/Spark-Bible-NRSV>.

There are three opportunities for Adult Faith Formation.

Mission Mondays

God's mission has a church. Check out a video message from one of the St. Philip pastors on Mondays in December as they muse about matters of faith. Go to the St. Philip website (www.stphiliplutheran.net) or Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StPhilipLutheran>) to view.

Advent Devotionals

Advent is a season of waiting, preparation and expectation. As we

Living Lutheran

Did you know St. Philip is a part of a wider church denomination that is actively living out God's grace in the United States and throughout the whole world? Stories of our work together are told each month in the magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America called Living Lutheran.

Living Lutheran signifies this church's living, daring confidence in God's grace. The magazine features stories and commentary from the 3.5 million members and 9,300 congregations; resources to help you deepen your faith; monthly

journey towards Christmas, we prepare our homes and hearts for the coming of Jesus. To help in your preparations, St. Philip has Advent devotionals available for disciples of all ages. Please call the church office, if you would like a devotional.

In addition the Virginia Synod is offering devotionals for download on their website. "As we prepare this Advent to greet the mystery and the joy of God With Us in Jesus Christ, we invite one another to share "Devotions and Prayers for the Season of Advent" in the form of a daily devotional. This devotional journeys with Joseph and Mary toward the birth of Emmanuel, as proclaimed by the gospel of Matthew. Each day's reflection is offered by a different voice within our synod – from the Bishop's office, candidates for ordination, a Navy chaplain, a pastoral counselor, a deacon, and several pastors – reminding us that now as much as ever we walk together to the manger as to the cross." Devotionals can be found here: <https://files.constantcontact.com/0d5de1e8001/f5937233-875e-4941-9bd7-8983957c1525.pdf>

Monday Morning Bible Study:

Study the scripture for the upcoming Sunday the Monday prior. Join us from wherever you are on Zoom.com on Mondays at 9:30am. Meeting i.d. 838 9536 5636 , Passcode: 24019

reflections from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; and coverage of religious news, events and social issues.

As a partner in God's mission, Living Lutheran shares with the ELCA's diverse membership the stories of God's people living their faith.

You may order individual subscriptions to Living Lutheran magazine at <https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/16931/The-Lutheran> or by calling 800-328-4648. Or subscribe to the e-news at: www.livinglutheran.org/edigest-signup



Amazon Smile

As the Christmas shopping season comes remember to use Amazon Smile. Through AmazonSmile, Amazon.com will make a donation to St. Philip at no cost to you. Use the link below or search for St. Philip Lutheran Evangelical Church on the Amazon Smile site. <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1087322>. For each purchase you make Amazon.com donates a small percentage of the proceeds to St. Philip. Over time, this money can add up to help support the ministry of our congregation. And for you Prime members out there, yes you can still use your Prime Membership when you shop with Amazon Smile.

Prayer Requests

Scott Buchanan – Member
Calvin Knotts – Member
Judy Diekow – Member
Kathryn Buchanan – Member
Betty Hammond – Member
Ruth Albertin - Juli Albertin's mother
Rusty Johnson - Dolly Johnson's son
Forest Kanode - Kanodes' grandson
Jamie Hinkle - Kanode's friend
Emily Totten - Member & Scott Buchanan's sister
Barbara Simpson - Member

December Birthdays

Sarah Melendy – 1
Genie Brown – 7
Kay Moyer – 7
Robin Burke – 15
Bucky Moyer – 16
Paul Henkel – 17
Rhonda Wilhelm – 17
Barbara Hughes – 19
Marlys Saeger - 19
Malinda Britt - 21
Allen Britt - 22
Tracey Schult - 22
Chris Staley - 26
Doris Waldron - 28



St. Philip Lutheran Church
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Roanoke, VA 24019

Change Service Requested

David C. Derrick, Pastor (pastordavid@stphiliplutheran.net)
Laura Swanson, Pastor (pastorlaura@stphiliplutheran.net)
Laura J. Weatherford Burns, Office Administrator (officeadmin@stphiliplutheran.net)
Judy Burnette, Director of Music Ministries (music@stphiliplutheran.net)
Teresa Siler-Lee, Nursery Attendant
Jody Draper, Custodian

Church Council

Gary Sahn, Council President; Gary Dudley, Council Vice-President; Peter Shick, Treasurer;
Abby and Dave Mellon, Financial Secretary; Linda Duncan Rhodes Council Secretary
Members: Doug Layman, Shannon Radmacher, Kathleen Radtke, Donna Spradlin, Dan Horine, Elizabeth Horine

St. Philip Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
The Reverend Bob Humphrey, Bishop, Virginia Synod

