

The Epistle

St. Philip Lutheran Church
September 2019

Pastor's Message

Dear Friends in Christ,
Last October the Congregational Council and I entered into a covenant agreement. The covenant was designed to specify ways we would support each other so you would be ready for the next chapter of St. Philip's life and ministry.

We have lived out that covenant and I believe have made the specifics of that covenant a part of the culture of St. Philip. On All Saints Sunday I shared with you two words that would be important for our time together, Patience and Humor. I can tell you I have really appreciated your patience with me and I think we have been able to laugh frequently with enthusiasm. It is my hope those words will be a part of life at St. Philip as you move on.

I don't think any of us really knew what to expect as we began our ministry together and that was a good thing since we all got some surprises. No matter what happened we were able to be gracious and learn from each experience we shared; Your confidence in your leaders and God's hand in your ministry of today and the future.

You all will be in my prayers as you move on in confidence and hope writing a new chapter in the life and ministry of St. Philip Lutheran Church. Many thanks for you patience and sense of humor with me.

Remember sometimes you have to go out on a limb, because that is where the fruit is.

Shalom,
Pastor Jim

God's work. Our hands.



Sunday September 8, 2019
Worship Service @ 10:00 am

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Service projects at 11:00

Sunday School for All Ages

Rally Day Sunday September 15, 2019
10:10 am



In This Issue

Page

Pastor's Message	1
Community	2
Sunday School	4
Planting Hope	5
ELCA Assembly News	7
Fellowship Groups	8
Youth	6
Fellowship	8
Serving	10
Congregation Council	13
Special Dates	14
Calendar of Events	15
FYI	16

Farewell from Pastor Elizabeth

As we each begin the month of September, we are all looking forward to the "nexts" in our lives. I will be holding you, my siblings in Christ, in prayer as you continue to look forward to a new pastor, and I request your prayers in my time of discernment. I have loved my time with you and you will continue to live in my heart.

As we move forward, I would like to highlight the nursery update. Shortly after I came to St Philip, I began looking at our children's spaces and the way we welcome them and their families. As such, Sharon Pfalzgraf and I began dreaming about updating the nursery during the summer of 2018. We dreamed about brighter colors and toys and books with purpose. We dreamed about a space for faith exploration and faith development for our youngest children.

I am thrilled that we were able to get this project started and you should check it out!

Jerry and Dianne Rimmer painted the nursery and it looks great! We have streamlined some of the toys and added a bookshelf to make books more accessible. We hope to trade out the metal cabinet for something else, but it serves as a storage space for many of the infant supplies. Sally Bowman and Sandy Glass scrubbed and cleaned all the toys and Jerry and Dianne were amazing in completing the painting with very quick turnaround so we never had a Sunday without a usable nursery. Many thanks to Jerry and Dianne, Sally & Sandy!

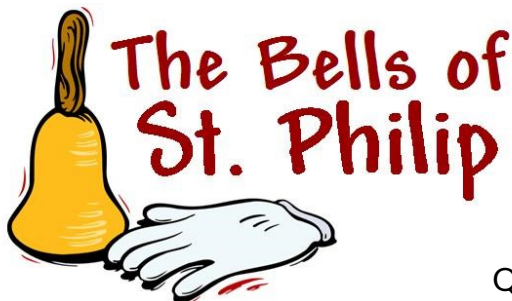
Saint Andrews Gun Violence Prevention

Update

We did not have anyone from St Philip attend the workshop on 7/21/19, but we would still love for more participation. Our next scheduled meeting is Sunday Sept 8th at 1pm at Saint Andrews, room 6. All are welcome.

We had representatives from Beth Or synagogue, the Raleigh Mennonite Church and SAPC, law enforcement, teachers, and parents. Our discussion was a brief history of where SAPC has been and then we discussed goals for improving our communities and providing education in multiple forums to area houses of worship and beyond. We also spoke of youth involvement in Gun violence prevention from our congregations. Please extend an invitation to all to join us! ~ *Melinda Carr, Coordinator*

Since the next meeting falls on our God's Work Our Hands Sunday, we thought it would be an additional way for folks to serve God. John Sullivan will be attending, we hope you'll prayerfully consider being part of this discussion too. There is no set school of thought rather by having so many people attend the hope is to grow solutions in a wider direction. Please see our July Epistle for a more in depth description. You can find it on our website St-Philip.org



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to ring bells?

Well an opportunity is coming for you! You'll learn how to ring and will be able to play during worship. No previous experience necessary, just come ready to have some fun & the desire to try something new to praise God with!

Practice will start up again on Sunday, September 8th at 5:30 pm

Questions? Contact Regan Chuhran @ chuhrare@gmail.com

Message from Cathryn Hewett, Director of Faith Formation

Sunday School for All Ages

10:10 - 10:50

beginning

September 22nd

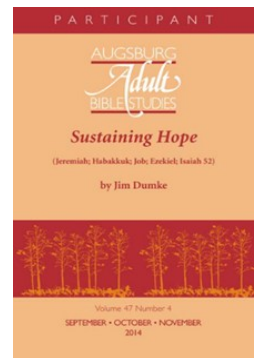


2's - 5th Grade Sunday School—Our 2's through 5th grade kids are offered a Sunday school time that includes stories, games, crafts, and fun. The kids are in a multi-aged classroom led by awesome teachers: Michelle Hooks, Carol Rogers, Laura Carlson, and Jane Foil. Parents are always welcome! This group meets in the classrooms in the education building.

Middle School Sunday School—Our 6th-8th graders will be engaged in a discussion based class. Our goal is to connect faith to our every day lives. This group meets in the Faith Formation space near the sanctuary.

High School Sunday School—Our 9th-12th graders will be using a new curriculum that connects local and world events to our faith. Our goal is to connect faith to the world around us and how we respond to our world. This group meets in the Gathering Room near the sanctuary.

Augsburg Sunday School—The Augsburg Adult Sunday School class will continue with a study on Responding to God's Grace. This topical Bible study will use texts from Genesis, Exodus, Luke, 2 Corinthians, and more to inform one's faith and discipleship in daily life. This class is an opportunity to deepen and share your faith with your brothers and sisters in Christ here at St. Philip. Class facilitation is rotated among the members and meets in the library. All are welcome! If you come by and find the door closed, come on in—sometimes it is closed due to the noise and activity in the hallway.



Faith and Fellowship Sunday School—F&F is a discussion based Sunday school class that offers multiple series on various topics throughout the year.

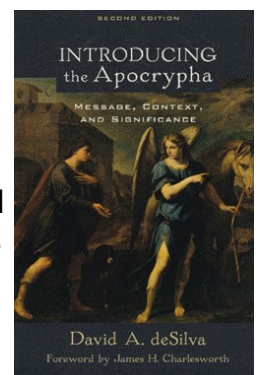


We'll kick off the year with *Animate: Faith* using videos which blend live action with animations - to introduce a question, provide a thought-provoking perspective - with a time for discussion on personal reflection and share ideas with the group. This group meets in Luther Hall.

Animate: Faith is a 7 week course, led by Howard Cunningham.

Fall 2019 - Adult Weekday Bible Study

Mondays starting September 23rd at 10:30 am in the Music Room and 6:30 pm in the Library, will begin a study of the writings that comprise the Apocrypha. Guided by the book, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, by David A deSilva, distinguished professor of New Testament and Greek at Ashland Theological Seminary and ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. Please consider this study as an opportunity to learn more about the ancient scriptures and their role in informing our faith. Howard Cunningham will lead this 12 week study.



Planting Hope

What do You Think? Survey Results

After receiving 111 survey responses, the Planting Hope team met to see what trends showed up. Here, you can see the results as well.

The next training session for the Planting Hope team is Sept. 28th after which they will meet again to develop a purpose statement that reflects your voices as well as giving us a common focus for all ministries within St. Philip.

There will be opportunities for feedback at town hall meetings that will be held in October, dates TBD.

The Planting Hope team thanks you all for your input and appreciate that so many of your thoughts will be included in our potential purpose statement!!



Question 1 Choose 5 words to describe the ideal congregation



Word Clouds:

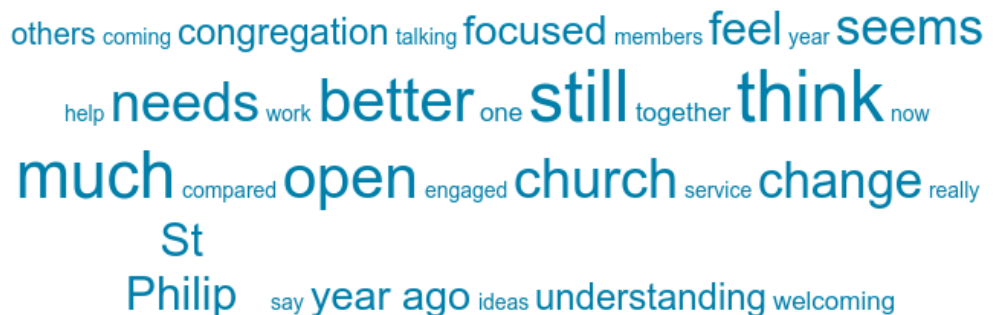
The larger the word, the more people said the same thing.

(the N = did not attend generation Panel)

Question 2 Generational Panel take away



Question 3 Describe St. Philip now versus a year ago





2019 ELCA CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

AUGUST 5-10, 2019 • MILWAUKEE

Our denomination, the ELCA, holds a churchwide assembly triennially - to worship, vote on matters of governance and policy, and be church together for the sake of the world. This past week's churchwide assembly was full of important votes and actions, including:

- Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was reelected for a second six-year term on the first ballot.
- A declaration of apology to our siblings of African descent, which was received by the African Descent Lutheran Association with thanks and a call for accountability and living into the words shared.
- Approved resolution declaring the ELCA is a “sanctuary church body,” encouraging participation in the ELCA AMMPARO initiative for migrant children, discernment of care for our immigrant neighbors in our context, and the promise of forthcoming resources for this work.
- Approved support for the World Council of Church's *Thursdays in Black*, awareness movement for a world without rape and violence.
- Voted to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance, in honor and remembrance of the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9.
- Approved a declaration for inter-religious commitment, reaffirming ecumenical and interfaith partnerships.
- Approved the recommendations from a strategic taskforce which has been studying how to work toward authentic diversity in our church.
- Approved memorials: affirming but not “endorsing” the Poor People's Campaign, care for immigrants and refugees, and other statements.
- Adopted a new social statement, “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: a Lutheran Call to Action,” and its implementing resolutions.
- Deacon Sue Rothmeyer was elected Churchwide Secretary, a full-time position which acts as executive administrator and leader on all constitutional matters and interpretation.
- Constitutional change for Deacons (rostered ministers of word and service) to be ordained, from the previous practice of consecration.
- Celebrated the milestones of 50 years of women's ordination, 40 years since the first woman of color was ordained, and 10 years since full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ clergy.



Middle School Youth Group

Our 6th-8th graders will meet twice monthly at times determined through communication between the Director of Faith Formation and parents. Through youth group we work to learn different ways that we serve the Body of Christ as well as how the Body of Christ meets us in our everyday lives.

High School Youth Group

Our 9th-12th grades will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 starting on Sept. 11 in the youth area in the basement. We will begin with a meal provided by adults from the congregation who want to spend a little time with the best youth non the world! Through youth group we strive to learn about ourselves including our strengths and weaknesses and how we can best serve the Body of Christ and how we can best accept the gifts of others in the Body of Christ.

Friends are always welcome!!



St. Philip Lutheran Preschool News



St. Philip Lutheran Preschool

St. Philip Lutheran Preschool will be starting the new school year this month. The voices and giggles and even a few tears will be heard in the halls and classrooms of the education building once again!

Our Parent Orientation was held on Wednesday evening, August 28 and our Student Orientation was held on Thursday morning, August 29. Classes will begin on Tuesday, September 3! This month we will be getting to know one another while children are learning to adjust to school routines. We are so excited to say that most of our classes are full!! We have 6 spots available for the new year!! God is SO good!! What a blessing for us!! Please feel free to visit us and you might even get a "little hug!!"

If you have a little one, friend or family that may be looking for a preschool this fall, we do have just six openings in some of the classes. Please visit <http://st-philip.org/preschool> for more information about the program and the registration form.

As always, we thank you for opening your doors and hearts to us!!

Join these 21st century theologians in worship, conversation, and collaboration. Keynote speakers: Brian McLaren, Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, and Steed Davidson. Brian McLaren is a writer, speaker, activist, and theologian in many fields including interreligious dialogue and ecotheology. His latest book, *The Galapagos Islands*, comes out this fall and will be on sale at the conference.

Robyn Henderson-Espinoza is a queer activist, Latinx scholar, and public theologian named one of the "10 Faith Leaders to Watch" by the Center for American Progress. Robyn works in the hybrid space of the church, academy, and movements.

Steed Davidson is a Hebrew/Old Testament scholar and Dean at McCormick Seminary in Chicago. His areas of study include prophetic literature, postcolonial studies, and black theology. Davidson was previously a professor at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, where he annotated portions of the Lutheran Study Bible.

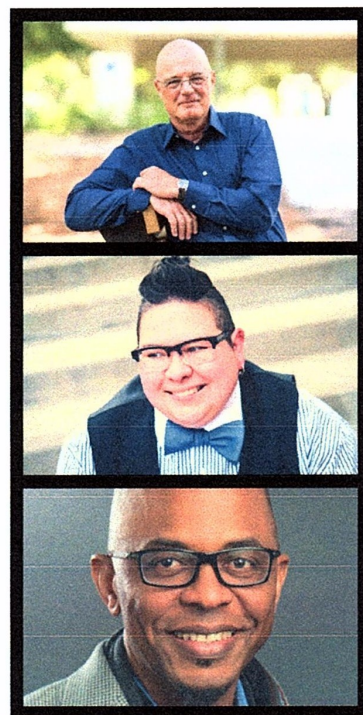
Ticket prices cover all activities, including admission to the live podcast Friday night, and lunch Saturday. Friday lunch will be an opportunity to explore Cary with one of the theologians. First 100 paid registrations will include a copy of Brian's and Robyn's latest books! Scholarships available for seminarians, pastors, and those in need, by request to Daniel.pugh@CTKCary.com. Early bird registration is through June 15th.

HOMEBREWED CHRISTIANITY AND
CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH
PRESENTS

CALLED TO BE PROPHETS

A FAITH FORWARD
PROCLAMATION

SEPTEMBER 27-28
CARY, NORTH CAROLINA



St. Philip received a thank you from Habitat for Humanity for the financial and people support that we have given to support of the important work of building community. With the goal of everyone in Wake and Johnston counties, and everyone in God's world, has access to good, affordable housing.

St. Philip has agreed to the following dates for sending volunteers to Habitat—

We will be building walls in the Habitat warehouse on September 7. This means participating in a well planned and orchestrated effort to frame all the walls and involves carrying lumber and nailing the lumber together.

Day One: Wall Build/Raising—Saturday, 9/7 Each church sends 5+ people. Lunch provided by: Thrivent

Week 2: Saturday, 9/21 We need 7-8 volunteers. Lunch provided by: Resurrection

Week 6: Saturday, 10/19 We need 7-8 volunteers. Lunch provided by: **St. Philip**

If anyone wishes to participate but does not want to be involved in construction we are volunteering to serve lunch on Saturday October 19. We need 2+ volunteers to 1) arrange for funding from Thrivent 2) bringing the food to the work site to serve about 40 people. 3) Staying to serve the food and cleanup.

The two construction dates can involve any aspect of construction from placing trusses, walls to painting or landscaping. It depends on what is needed for the day. Habitat provides water, snacks, bathroom facilities, tools and safety equipment. If you wish, you may bring your own tools like framing hammers or aprons etc. Questions—contact Mark Glass mark.glass@gmail.com or Julie Helmey Jhelmey@earthlink.net

Ladies Lunch

Will be held on Thursday, September 5th at
Lost Cajun, Falls of Neuse & Strickland Rd
Lunch begins at noon.

Please make your reservation with
Claire Muller, 919-752-6541 or
claire6078@att.net.
Hope to see you there!



Men's Pub Ministry

Join other St. Philip men on September 24th
6:30 pm at Wakefield Tavern, 13200 Falls
of Neuse Rd.

Men's Pub Ministry is an opportunity for
men in the congregation to meet and
socialize once a month. We select places
where we can talk and have a beer or other
beverage and, perhaps, a meal.

All men are welcome, hope to see you there!
Questions?

Contact Mark Glass at
mark.glass@gmail.com



Puzzle Get Together

Tuesday, September 24th at 10:00

Come, relax, and have fun
completing a puzzle.

Questions? Contact Claire Muller
at 919- 752-6541 or claire6078@att.net
Hope to see you there!

Men's Breakfast Club

Will meet on September 17th at 9:30
at **iHop** at Six Forks & Sawmill Rd.

Come and enjoy good food
and fellowship—there's room
for you at the table!

Questions? Contact Frank
Bouknight 919-302-1812 or
bouknightf@yahoo.com



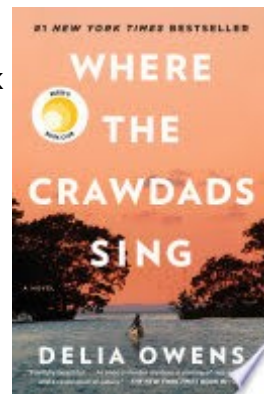
Senior Adult Book Club

We are on summer break now until September.

Join us on September 24th at 10:00 in
the parlor to discuss the month's book
choice—*Where the Crawdads Sing* by
Delia Owens.

The story follows two timelines,
slowly intertwining: the first
describes the life and adventures of a
young girl named Kya as she grows up
isolated in the swamps of North
Carolina through 1952–1969, and a
murder investigation of Chase Andrews, a local celebrity
of Barkley Cove, a fictional coastal town of North Carolina.

Everyone is invited to join the group, bring book
suggestions with you! Contact [Kathryn Edwards](mailto:Kathryn.Edwards@stphilip.org) or [Carol Williamson](mailto:Carol.Williamson@stphilip.org) with questions.



Saints & Sinners

Tuesday, September 10th at 11:30 is the fall kick off.

Everyone—all ages are invited to join in a
time of fellowship over a delicious lunch
and an interesting program.

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday every
month. Reserve your seat for lunch with
Carole Mason (919-210-0727) by Sept. 6th Lunch is \$7.00.



Women's Fellowship Group

St. Philip women meet on the 4th Tuesday evening of
the month at a local restaurant for good food and
fellowship.

This month we will meet on September 24th at 6:30
at Simply Crepes, Lafayette Village
For more information contact Carol Rogers
parakayaker@gmail.com

All women are invited!



S.W.A.T. Trip



Souls Walking Around Together

The day started hot and humid. I was worried that our new travel signs would have trouble adhering to the side of the rig. But the signs did their trick and seemed to draw close scrutiny wherever we went. Thanks to the vision of Frank Bouknight.

We loaded up hoping we would not stick together. Our rig's air conditioner was a Godsend of zoning and engineering. Rolling through the back country on roads lined with soy, corn, tobacco and wheat, we saw land as God meant its' bounty to be. After a while, people stopped checking their watch and adjusted their heart rate to take in the view. On these trips the rule of thumb is, backroads by day on the way out, and the interstate or major highway in the evening going home.

My navigator this trip was Chief Master Sergeant Ron Parmeter, USAF (retired). The Chief guided us to the Crackerbarrel in Dunn. The Lutheran arrival shuffle then took place as tables moved effortlessly into position. We were faced with the first decision of day, where to sit.



Sandy Glass, Stephen Minister, led us in prayer. Chow was good. Rule one, "Nothing brings out good conversation, like good chow."

Rolling through the fields of eastern North Carolina on Hwy. 421, there suddenly appeared a rest stop sign warning of a facility a mile off. I made the announcement and all were grateful that Mark Glass (IT) spoke up. The bus emptied quickly, at the Six Runs Creek facility. Thank God our ancestors had foresight. Which leads to Rule two, "It is better to actually stop at a rest stop."

We homed in on the aquarium through heavy beach traffic. Amazing sting rays—the only ones I had seen before were Chevies. The hammerhead shark was so fluid and flexible as it swam around turtles and dolphin.



S.W.A.T. Team Strikes Southeast—8/15/19

The day started hot and humid. I was worried that our new travel signs would have trouble adhering to the side of the



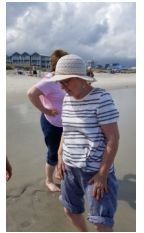
Loading up some tired team members, we went to Fort Fisher and then to an honest, actual



beach. All who wanted waded into the water like it was their first time, the cool offshore breeze was wonderful.



Weather was closing in and Lt. Col. Edgar Helmey USAF (retired), our weather watch, saw lightning in the distance and gave warning.



We loaded up as Carole Mason RN (retired) distributed water and snacks to all the crew.

We found I40 and headed west to supper in Kenansville. The Hwy. 55 grill staff could not have been more accommodating.



I had the best All American Philly Cheesesteak and onion rings I could have had outside of Philly.

Ilse Anke and others were impressed with the ice cream.

Thank God the coffee was good as by this time I needed some.

We got back through some rather intense storm activity at times. Sandy led a prayer of thanks upon arrival.

Next trip will be September 26th—we will strike west to pan for gold and ride to a mountain top.

May God bless us all.

Reported by Mark Tarquinio





St. Philip Quilting Group

It is exciting for our group to know that folks who can use our quilts made with much effort and care will be used and enjoyed by people half a world away.

The St. Philip Quilting Group meets at 9:30 on the 2nd & 4th & 5th Wednesday morning of the month. You don't have to be a 'quilter' in order to participate in helping to put the quilts together.

You are welcome to come try it out, no obligation! Our small group would love to welcome more folks to come and help! For more information contact Barbara Burdette at bburd45955@aol.com



Will You Rent or Sell to Us?

In response to the increasing need for affordable housing in our community, Families Together has launched a new Affordable Housing Project and we need the help of local owners/managers of rental property. Our near-term goals are to purchase a small apartment building with 4-8 units and to lease a block of up to 10 units. We also want to build our network of landlords and property owners who will give us first right of refusal for rental properties as they become available.

The need for this project is urgent. Last school year, Wake County schools reported 929 students living in motels – nearly quadruple the number just a few years ago. As we build a portfolio of blended housing options, we can help more of these families get out of unsafe living situations and benefit from our comprehensive life skills training and supportive services so they can move into affordable, permanent housing.

We'd love to talk to you if you own or manage property to explore creative ways we could partner in this critical effort. Whether you sell, rent or even donate property to Families Together, you can make a life-changing difference for children in our community by expanding our capacity to move more families from homelessness to home.

Please contact Lisa Rowe, Executive Director, at lisa@famielstogethernc.org or 919-212-1123 x224 to discuss ways we can work together to increase the pool of affordable housing for homeless families with children in our community.

Don't forget to like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter! Please visit our website FamiliesTogetherNC.org, or reach us by mail at Families Together, P.O. Box 14395, Raleigh, NC 27620 to learn more. 919-212-1123 ext. 231.

Brown Bag Ministry

BBM meets every month on the 2nd & 4th Saturday morning at 10:00 in Luther Hall to prepare and deliver lunches to neighbors at Cedar Point.

- ♦ This is a great opportunity to serve for the whole family!
- ♦ We need your hands to help make and distribute the lunches.
- ♦ Food donations are usually needed to round out what food comes from the NC Food Pantry, watch your email for donation needs.
- ♦ Questions? Email Stacey Bell at raleighbells@yahoo.com



Brown Bag Ministry

Send a Card Sunday

September 8th —

Nurture each other by sending a card or a note of hope and of gratitude. Send God's Light into the world with a card.

We have the cards & postage and will deliver to the Post Office.



Send a card to

- ♥ a member
- ♥ friend

- ♥ military person
- ♥ a neighbor
- ♥ a graduate

Dearest Friends,

How can we thank you enough for the many prayers, visits, meals, calls, flowers and cards during Bobby's illness! He is recovering at home and getting stronger each day!

God has provided, protected, encouraged and loved us all during this time. We thank our Lord for each of you and we will always cherish your love and friendship. We will be forever grateful for each of you as you will always hold a special place in our hearts! May God continue to bless you today and always.

In His love and ours,
Bobby, Jane Foil and Family



Souls Walking Around Together

S.W.A.T. Team Strikes West for Gold

THURSDAY 9/26/19 7:45 am

North Carolina was once the leading gold producing state in the nation, before California took over in 1849. We will head out at 7:45 on Thursday morning, Sept. 26. The first stop will be at the Cracker Barrel in Sanford. About an hour and a half after breakfast, we will drive to the top of Morrow Mountain for photo ops, where you might want to bring cameras to take shots of the surrounding countryside.

From Morrow Mountain it is a short drive to the gold mine, where panning will cost \$3 a pan. I'm a single pan kind of guy myself, sometimes I use a crock pot.

Lunch will be snacks carried on board by Carole—string cheese, apple sauce and crackers.

Supper will be on the way home at the Barbecue Cabin. We will travel the backroads on the way out and be efficient coming home.

Transportation cost is \$20 each.

So dust off your panning duds. This is all done in the rinse cycle.

Reserve your seat with Carole Mason 919-210-0727.

We encourage any boy between the ages of 11 - 17 to join us on Tuesday's between 7:00 - 8:30 pm. Regular weekly meetings begin on September 10, 2019

Contact:

secureoperationst342@gmail.com

or

Troop342.TeamSnap.com



Giving			
	Actual	Plan	%
July 2019	\$38,080	\$41,271	92%
Year to Date	\$262,051	\$293,272	89%

**July 2019
Financial Summary**

Category	Current Month Actual	Current Month Plan	%	YTD Actual	YTD Plan	%
Income						
General Fund	\$27,964	\$ 34,891	80%	\$237,848	\$244,237	97%
Other Income	\$ 10,116	\$ 6,380	159%	\$ 24,203	\$49,035	49%
Total Income	\$38,080	\$ 41,271	92%	\$262,051	\$293,272	89%
Expenses	\$ 36,868	\$ 45,231	82%	\$244,471	\$301,846	81%
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ 1,213	\$ (3,960)		\$ 17,579	\$ (8,574)	

The Annual Budgeted Revenue needed to meet expenses is \$504,031

**August 2019
Attendance Summary**

Service	Weekly	Month Average
Crossing	142	36
Traditional	261	66
Month Total	403	107

Making Space

Engaging the Holy in the Ordinary

Retreat Leaders: Rev. Sharon Taylor & Rev. Pam Northrup

Oct. 4-6
at the
Kure Beach Faith Center

Is the hectic pace of your life overwhelming you? Are you longing for balance and moments of peace?
Are you looking for practical tools that make space for the holy in daily life?

If so, this is the retreat for you. In our fast-paced world, many struggle with making space for engagement with God. The noise in the world and in our own hearts makes it difficult to see and hear the Holy. Our spiritual lives become disconnected from our human existence.

Come to the Kure Beach Faith Center to experience a time away for rest, renewal, and an engagement with the Holy. We'll explore ways to connect our spiritual and ordinary lives using a combination of individual and communal spiritual practices. Come reconnect to the Spirit in the beauty of creation!

Cost = \$160 per person

Includes: Friday snacks, Saturday meals, Sunday brunch
Friday and Saturday night housing (double occupancy)
Retreat program

Need more info? Contact Sharon Taylor: rev_st@yahoo.com
Want to register? Contact Christa: program@agapekurebeach.org

www.agapekurebeach.org



Message from Congregation Council

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Over the past few years I've gone through some soul searching and I want to share it with you. St. Philip went through our first wave of members leaving when the ELCA gave approval to have homosexual pastors. There was a clause that said it was up to each individual congregation to determine if they would call such a pastor or not. We lost a bunch of members, but Julie and I stayed because we feel that St. Philip is our faith family. At that time, I really didn't give the whole gay and lesbian issue much thought and said I would deal with it if the time ever came.

During the past two or three years we've heard more about the LGBTQ community and that we need to be more welcoming. We've held studies on the topic. Pastor Chad Rimmer led a very enlightening study on the issue. We held a Q&A forum with a panel of folks from the LGBTQ community. I've read a couple of books on the subject and have done a lot of thinking and praying on the issue.

When I was young, being homosexual was considered a sin. It was against the way God created life. I lost a couple of friends in high school and college when they came out. At that time, it was considered a choice and they were making a bad one. Somehow the concept of grace wasn't applied to them.

What I've come to understand and believe is that it's not really a choice. There's something in their DNA and to fight it is not natural for them. As one panelist in our Q&A forum said, "who would choose this for themselves?"

As for homosexuality being a sin, we are all sinners and by God sending His only Son to die for us and our sin, it's by His grace that we are all saved. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us more and nothing we can do to make Him love us any less. If we believe that God is a loving God, why would He create some people that He would reject and others that He would love? He didn't. He loves us all and so should we.

We've had a homosexual, Vicar Sharon Schultz, minister to us, and she was powerful. She has a gift for preaching and her messages were God inspired.

So why am I writing about this?

In January of this year, we took a major step in the adoption of an intentional welcoming statement that says more than just "All Are Welcome." It explicitly says that regardless of race, creed, ability, or sexual orientation, all are welcome. I believe that is true at St. Philip. We are a warm, loving and welcoming congregation. The welcoming statement was the first step.

There is a designation called "Reconciled In Christ" or RIC for short. Essentially, it means that we believe that all people are reconciled by the Grace of God through Christ our savior and that all people are welcome to God's house regardless of sexual orientation. This designation was created specifically for the LGBTQ community to enable them to find a non-judgmental place to worship. Churches that apply for and are granted the RIC designation can place this designation on their website and are listed in a directory of RIC congregations www.reconcilingworks.org.

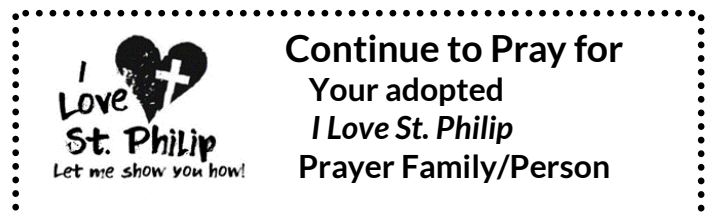
We are moving forward to get that designation and a congregational meeting will be held in October to discuss and vote on this. I hope that you will plan to attend as this is an important step for us in the life of our congregation.

If you want to discuss this prior to the meeting, please reach out to me. I'll be happy to listen and share as appropriate.

We are all God's children and who of us would stop loving our child when we found out he/she is homosexual? As Jesus said to the crowd ready to stone the lady... "let he who is without sin cast the first stone." None of us is without sin and thank God for His Amazing Grace!

God Loves You and So Do I,

Don Helmey
Council President





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Service 10:10 am Adult Sunday School 11:00 am Traditional Ministry Worship 1:00 pm Restoration 6:30 pm Nurturing Relationships	2 Office Closed for Labor Day	3	4 10:00 am Staff 10:00 am Senior Adult Team	5 12:00 pm Ladies Lunch 6:30 pm Crossing Rehearsal	6 10:00 am AI-Anon 7:00 pm AA	7 8:30 am Habitat for Humanity Work Day
8 10:00 am God's Work. Our Hands. Worship 11:00 am Service Projects 1:00 pm Restoration Ministry Worship 5:30 pm Handbells 6:30 pm Congregation Council 6:30 pm Worship & Music	9 10:30 am Bible Study	10 11:30 am Saint & Sinners 7:00 pm Preschool Board 7:00 pm Boy Scouts 7:00 pm Property Team	11 9:30 am Quilting 10:00 am Staff 6:30 pm Youth Group	12 6:30 pm Crossing Rehearsal 7:00 pm Finance & Responding	13 10:00 am AI-Anon 7:00 pm AA	14 10:00 am Brown Bag Ministry 7:00 pm AA
15 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Service 10:10 am Rally Day 11:00 am Traditional Ministry Worship	16	17 9:30 am Men's Breakfast 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	18 10:00 am Staff 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	19 6:30 pm Crossing Rehearsal	20 10:00 am AI-Anon 7:00 pm AA	21 8:30 am Habitat for Humanity Work Day 7:00 pm AA
22 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Service 10:10 am Sunday School 11:00 am Traditional Service 1:00 pm Restoration Ministry Worship	23 10:30 am Apocrypha Study 6:30 pm Apocrypha Study	24 10:00 am Puzzle Get together 6:30 pm Women's Fellowship 6:30 pm Men's Pub Ministry 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	25 9:30 am Quilting 10:00 am Staff 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	26 6:30 pm Crossing Rehearsal	27 10:00 am AI-Anon 7:00 pm AA	28 10:00 am Brown Bag Ministry 7:00 pm AA
29 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Service 10:10 am Sunday School 11:00 am Traditional Ministry Worship	30 10:30 am Apocrypha Study 6:30 pm Apocrypha Study					

Gracious God,

As the family of St. Philip we ask that
you open our ears to hear
God's call for us
and guide our feet in following.

Help us to be good stewards of our
time and treasure and to put our trust
in you to provide.

We ask for blessings on the life of our
future pastor and that your Spirit guide
us in preparing for this
new relationship in ministry.

We put our hope in you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Rev. Jim Huffman

Interim Pastor

pastor@st-philip.org

Cathryn Hewett

Director of Faith

Formation

cathryn@st-philip.org

Reagan Chuhran

Organist/Pianist

919-846-2992

www.St-Philip.org

Office Hours:

Mon-Fri

9:00 – 4:00



Jane Gue

Office Administrator

admin@st-philip.org

Y'Sang Milo

Custodian

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St. Philip Lutheran Church

7304 Falls of Neuse Road

Raleigh, NC 27615

919-846-2992

www.St-Philip.org

