

the Epistle

February, 2025

St. Philip Lutheran Church

7304 Falls of Neuse Rd., Raleigh, NC 27516 St-Philip.org

Pastor's Message

If this newsletter comes out later than usual, please forgive me. It is my fault, as I am late with this monthly pastoral column. I have had an extraordinarily busy week, and I appreciate your patience and forbearance.

We are coming off a tremendous Annual Congregational Meeting, one which a long-term member described as "the best we've ever had, because it was just a celebration of everything." Our President, Paul Augustowski, led us in giving thanks to God for all God has done for us this year. Our worship attendance has increased 30% over the past five years, going from an average of 125 to 163. We have received 77 new members during that same period. Those are astounding figures. New and regular visitors continue to attend worship services at a remarkable rate. Thank you for being a warm, welcoming, and hospitable community to those who worship with us.

We gave 120% of what we pledged financially, meaning we pledged \$381,000 and gave \$457,000, exceeding our pledge by \$76,000. After facing a potential \$60,000 deficit last fall, we ended up with an \$11,000 surplus. We gave most of that to the NC Synod and to the victims of the recent fire at the Families Together apartments.

Our Outreach efforts this year were simply stunning. You can consult the Annual Report for more specific details, but – as a church which averages 163 people on a Sunday – we tangibly impacted the lives of over 16,000 people in need. Let that sink in. That is breathtaking.

We gave (roughly) an additional 14% outside of our budget to help our neighbors. Our mission here at St. Philip is "sharing the love of Christ," and we are clearly living into that with faithfulness and integrity. Thank you so much for sharing your time, talents, and treasures near and far in God's kingdom.

Looking forward, we have received 82 financial pledges in the amount of \$395,000 for 2025, an increase of \$14,000 from last year. We have just received a \$25,000 donation to go towards our new A/V system, which we will begin installing soon in both worship service spaces. The Church Council is excited about our upcoming retreat in March, in which we will do some visioning for our future.

In the midst of such an inspiring season in our church, we have some people suffering in many ways in our congregation: physically, emotionally, mentally. Please pray for the names on our prayer list. Pray for them "without ceasing," as Scripture exhorts. We particularly grieve the passing of Dave Wahlstrom, who was a beloved friend and devoted disciple of Christ. Among many other things, he helped resurrect our Pub Ministry here, taking us from a monthly gathering of a handful of individuals to nearly 30, and from simply partaking of a meal together to meaningful service projects. "Eternal rest, grant him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him."

Sharing the love of Christ!
Pastor Tim



A Message from Your Neighbors at Refugee Hope Partners—



In the past week, two executive orders were issued that directly impact refugee resettlement in the United States. The [first](#) order halts all refugee resettlement for a minimum of 90 days, while the [second](#) suspends federal funding for refugees already resettled, halting critical support for food, housing, job assistance, and basic needs—resources essential for newly arrived families to thrive. For families already here, this sudden funding freeze places them at risk.

While this federal freeze does not directly impact Refugee Hope Partners' **funding**, we do anticipate a sharp increase in the number of refugee neighbors looking to us for support and help.

In this moment of uncertainty, **Refugee Hope Partners is uniquely positioned to step into the gap.** As the only Christian, privately funded refugee organization in the Triangle, we have a history of responding in times of crisis. We are ready to rise to the challenge again, but we cannot do it alone.

This is an opportunity for the Church to shine. What if we, as the body of Christ, met the needs of our refugee neighbors with radical generosity, sharing the hope of the gospel as we offer practical support?

Let's join together in prayer and action. Pray for separated families, vulnerable refugees, and our partners across the country. Pray for wisdom for our leaders and for God's provision as we navigate these challenges. Pray that Jesus' name will be proclaimed, drawing people to Himself through this work.

Refugee Hope Partners is committed to standing firm in our mission. With your partnership, we will continue to engage, equip and encourage our refugee neighbors so that all may thrive.

JOIN US IN THIS WORK

Looking for a place to ask questions or learn more? **Join RHP Leadership on a Q&A zoom call this Monday, February 3rd from 7-8pm** where Executive Director, Michele Suffridge, will be providing updates on this situation and will provide a large time for questions! [Click Here to access the zoom link](#)

Join RHP for a larger **Prayer and Worship Night** on Monday, February 17th from 7-8pm at the RHP Welcome Center - [Find More Details and RSVP Here](#)

Volunteer with us! If you are already registered to volunteer you can sign up for opportunities on our [volunteer portal here](#). New to volunteering? We have a Starting Point Volunteer Orientation next Wednesday, February 5th from 6:30-7:30pm at the RHP Welcome Center. [Learn more and sign up here.](#)

Help stock RHP's Baby closet located at St. Marks United Methodist Church - space that has opened its doors to new and expecting refugee mothers since 2021. [Learn more here.](#)



Families Together Fire Relief Gifts – Thank you!

We want to thank you for your generosity in donating items, gift-cards, and making financial gifts to Families Together following the fire at one of their Emergency Shelter Apartment buildings on December 30. We were able to drop off two full van loads of needed supplies and support items. All four families (12 children and 5 adults) are safe and very thankful for the outpouring of support from St. Philip and the rest of the community.

The good news is that these four families are now on their way to secure, permanent housing. Families Together is still taking stock of the damage and has put together a task force to help figure out the next steps and future plans for the burned out apartment complex and that space.

2 van loads delivered to Families Together!



Outreach Opportunities You Can Get Involved In Today!

Ongoing Opportunities to get connected:

- ♥ North Raleigh Ministries – Volunteer at the Food Pantry **(TOP NEED!)**
- ♥ North Raleigh Ministries – Volunteer at the Thrift Shoppe(s)
- ♥ Refugee Hope Partners – Brown Bag Ministries on the 2nd & 4th Saturday each month.
Also looking for additional volunteers who might be interested in helping to pick up food for the packing days as needed.
- ♥ Refugee Hope Partners – Volunteer for the “Homework Help Program”
- ♥ Families Together – Join our “Tidy Team” which cleans apartments as clients move in and out of transitional housing on an as needed basis.

If you are interested in finding ways to plug-in or in getting additional information about any of our Outreach Opportunities, please contact Kai@st-philip.org





A Gathering of Grievors 'Chat & Chew'

Grab dinner or just bring a snack and join us in the Music Room on the second Tuesday of each month starting December 10th, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

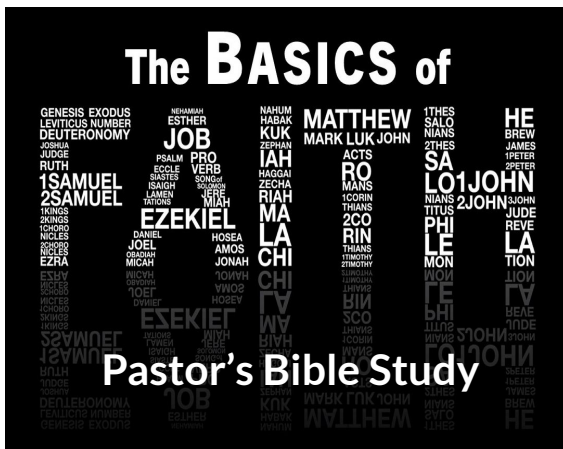
We meet to discuss our losses, support each other, and to share our experience, strength, and hope with each other after the loss of a loved one.

This is a SAFE PLACE to talk about our loved one and to be understood in a culture that doesn't always support us in our grief. Our goal is to build a supportive Christian community in our time of need.

Mark your calendar now:

♥ Tuesday, February 11, 2025 from 6-7:30 pm

We will meet the second Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30 pm in the St. Philip Music Room from now on.



On Wednesdays at 10:30 am & 6:45 pm in the music room.

Our topics include Healing, Justice, Transformation, and Music.

We anticipate continued high attendance and spirited conversation. Although we strongly encourage in-person attendance, we will also offer a Zoom option.

Zoom in the Morning: [Click Here](#)

Zoom in the Evening: [Click Here](#)

Everyone is welcome to join — we hope to see you there!

Music Ministries



Voices of Praise Adult Choir

The choir sings in Sunday traditional services. Rehearsal is at 7:00 pm on Thursdays.

The Bells of St. Philip Handbell Choir

We meet on Sundays at 5:00 in the Sanctuary— You do not need previous experience or ability to read music. Just a desire to make a joyful noise to the Lord! (really!)

Come on out and give it a try!

Crossing Praise Team

Adults and any brave high school students are welcome to join this group! This team leads worship at the 9:00 Contemporary service. Practice is held before Sunday morning worship in Kepley Hall.



**I will sing of
the Lord's great
love forever.**

PSALM 89:1

Family Ministries

Family Ministry: For families with children grades 5 and under!

All families with children grade 5 and under are invited to join us for a late afternoon where we check in with each other, sing a song or two, have some kid friendly learning + crafts + and free play games, adult conversation about a podcast or book of the Bible, and a family meal afterwards!

This month join us on Sunday afternoons, February 2 & 16 from 3:30-5:30 pm. We end our time together with a simple meal!

For additional information or if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Kai@st-philip.org

Children/Youth & Family Calendar

January

2/2— Family Ministry w/ Dinner (birth-grade 5 + parents/guardians) 3:30—5:30pm

2/16— Family Ministry w/ Dinner (birth-grade 5 + parents/guardians) 3:30—5:30pm

2/16— Youth— Bowling at Buffalo Lanes North 5:30 —7:30 pm

Please RSVP to Kai@st-philip.org if you are able to attend by Wednesday, February 12. We'll meet at the Bowling Alley at 5:30pm. The cost of bowling and shoes will be covered by the church. Any food, drinks, or arcade games will not be covered so plan to bring your own money for those things if that interests you.



St. Philip Lutheran Preschool

January was a fun month as we talked about wintertime fun! We had “Pajama Day” one day and came to school wearing our pajamas and had a “slumber party!” Everyone enjoyed wearing their pajamas to school ... especially the teachers!

Our Parent/Teacher conferences will be held at the beginning of February. Valentine’s Day will be celebrated as we share our love with our families and friends! You are always welcomed to join us for our programs or just stop by for a little visit....and BIG hugs too!!

Registration for the 2025-2026 school year is now open! If you are interested in signing up for your child or would like to tour the classrooms, please contact Leigh Anne Barham at 919-870-5841 or 919-818-9585. St. Philip Preschool has caring and nurturing teachers, a theme-based curriculum and large, inviting classrooms. Please tell your friends and neighbors about us!

Thank you, St. Philip Lutheran Church for opening your doors and hearts to young children in our community! We LOVE you ALL!!



You are invited to a yummy luncheon
on Tuesday, February 14th at 11:30
in Luther Hall.

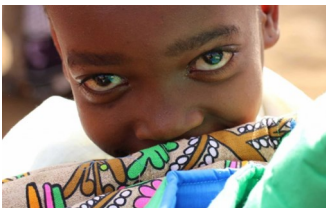
You can expect a delicious lunch prepared by our own Debbie Coccarelli and an interesting program. This month we welcome Maggie Kane who will tell us all about [A Place at the Table](#) a pay-as-you-can café in Raleigh.

Everyone is welcome to come!

Please RSVP for planning purposes to Carole Mason at 919-210-0727.

In January—

We enjoyed a presentation by Ken and Nancy Grant about their travels by ship across the Atlantic.



Lutheran World Relief Quilting Group

Volunteer to quilt for kids and families in need.

Often, when natural disasters strike or war drives families from their homes, our hearts ache with compassion but we don't know how to help. If you've wondered how to volunteer to quilt for charity, look no further.

Making Lutheran World Relief Mission Quilts is a tangible way to express love to our neighbors in need. Quilts can be used as warm bedding, simple tents or floor coverings. Each one reflects God's loving presence in a world rife with suffering.

The Quilters meet in the lower level of the education building. We are looking for willing hands who can use scissors, tie a knot and who enjoy a warm blanket—to help us on the 2nd, 4th & 5th Thursday mornings of the month at 10:00 am.

Please consider becoming involved in this worthwhile endeavor. Contact Barbara Burdette for more information: bburd45955@aol.com

A Welcoming Presence

Are you looking for a way to serve in our church this year?
There is a great need for greeters before the 11:00 service every Sunday.
It could not be easier! No training necessary.

All it requires is a willingness to be at church fifteen or twenty minutes before 11:00 and to say “hello”, “welcome”, or “good morning” to people as they arrive. It is really that simple...just be yourself. There is nothing to it and there is no wrong way to do it; and yet it is a powerful way to serve.

If you are interested please give it a try on Sunday. You can sign up on-line ([Click Here](#)) or on the poster in the Narthex, through our website or call Jane Gue in the church office if you have any difficulty signing up. For further information please call Barbara Sullivan @ 919 271-3283. Thank you!



Christ Caring for People through People



That's the motto of Stephen Ministry. The Stephen Minister's role is to bring God's love into the lives of people who are going through a time of transition or experiencing a crisis.

What do Stephen Ministers do?

They listen, care, support, encourage, and pray with and for a person who is hurting. And during this confidential, one-to-one, caring relationship, God's healing love comes pouring through.

If you or someone you know is going through a difficult time—large or small—and could benefit from the caring presence of a Stephen Minister, talk to Pastor Tim or a Stephen Ministry Leader.

Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you!

Stephen Leaders: [Kathy Blum](#) [Dan Heyl](#)



True Love

Many of us celebrate Valentine's Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring home handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present each other flowers, chocolate, a fancy card — maybe even an engagement ring!

As playful as Valentine's Day can be, it's also a great time to remember the serious side of love, as indicated by these quotes:

- “When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be.” —Leo Tolstoy
- “Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ...” —Ann Landers
- We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart: “We love because God first loved us.” —1 John 4:19 (NCV)

Faith & Fellowship

Monthly Breakfast Group—

Tuesday, February 18th at 9:30 am

We will meet at Falls River Café

10630 Durant Rd. (use the Bojangles driveway to their parking).

Spread the word and invite a friend for this casual time of fellowship and conversation!

Contact Frank Bouknight for more information. bouknightf@yahoo.com or 919-302-1812



Join us at 12:00 pm on Thursday, February 6th at Olive Garden on Capital Blvd.

Please contact Debbie Voress for the reservation. 919-782-2622

Every 1st Thursday!
Hope to see you there!



We will start the New Year out on Tuesday—2/25/25 @ 6:30 pm at the Nantucket Grill

Questions? contact Carol Rogers

parakayaker@gmail.com

Everyone is invited!!

Pub Ministry

The Pub Ministry Group will meet on Tuesday, February 25th, 6:30 pm at Saints & Scholars. Everyone is welcome!

Adult Book Club

Everyone is welcome!

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, 2/25 at 10am in the Parlor. We will be discussing *Rock, Paper, Scissors* by Alice Feeney

Things have been wrong with Mr and Mrs Wright for a long time. When Adam and Amelia win a weekend away to Scotland, it might be just what their marriage needs. Self-confessed workaholic and screenwriter Adam Wright has lived with face blindness his whole life. He can't recognize friends or family, or even his own wife.

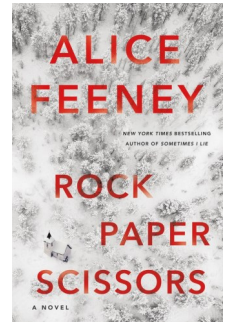
Every anniversary the couple exchange traditional gifts – paper, cotton, pottery, tin – and each year Adam's wife writes him a letter that she never lets him read. Until now. They both know this weekend will make or break their marriage, but they didn't randomly win this trip. One of them is lying, and someone doesn't want them to live happily ever after.

Ten years of marriage. Ten years of secrets. And an anniversary they will never forget. We hope to see you there!

Available at the Wake County Library.

Contact Kathryn Edwards for more info.

itsmekge@gmail.com



Cup of Joy—

Please take a few minutes after worship to enjoy a cup of coffee—or tea—and chat with your fellow worshippers!

Sharing a Cup of Joy on Sunday mornings after worshipping and praising God—gives us all an opportunity to Share the Love of Christ!

See you on Sunday morning!



Message from Finance Committee

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Lord has blessed us yet once again with the outpouring of generosity from our members. After being well behind on the income budget for the bulk of the year, strong giving in November and December resulted in a very positive year financially.

For the month of December, total income was \$77,568, or \$24,417 over plan, and expenses were \$72,247, or \$13,996 over plan. It should be noted that the overage on expenses was due to the fact that we account for all budgeted reserves in December. On a year-to-date basis, total income was \$628,472, or \$3,829 under plan, while expenses were \$616,849, or \$215,452 under plan. Income exceeded expenses by \$11,624.

Also during the year, substantial designated gifts fully paid for our new security system and the replacement of an HVAC unit. This and other designated gifts contributed to our general fund expenses being under budget

We thank God for you and your commitment to St. Philip and its ministries.

Blessings,
Jim Beck, Finance Chair

				December 2024		
Giving	Actual	Plan	%			
December 2024	\$ 77,568	\$ 53,150	146%			
Year to Date	\$628,472	\$ 632,301	99%			
Category	Current Month Actual	Current Month Plan	%	YTD Actual	YTD Plan	%
Income						
General Fund	\$ 74,116	\$ 44,167	168%	\$580,572	\$530,000	110%
Other Income	\$ 3,452	\$ 8,983	38%	\$ 47,900	\$ 102,301	47%
Total Income	\$ 77,568	\$ 53,150	146%	\$628,472	\$632,301	99%
Expenses						
Expenses	\$ 72,347	\$ 58,350	124%	\$ 616,849	\$632,301	98%
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ 5,221	\$ (5,200)		\$ 11624	\$ -	

The 2024 Annual Budgeted Revenue needed to meet expenses is \$632,301





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1 2:00 pm Shiloh Choir practice 7:00 pm AA
2 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Worship 10:00 am Augsburg Class 11:00 am Traditional Worship 1:30 pm Girl Scouts 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3:30 pm Family Ministry 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Training 5:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Y12SR	3 1:30 pm Staff 6:30 pm Property Team	4 6:30 pm Finance 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	5 9:30 am Senior Adult Ministry 10:30 am Bible Study 6:45 pm Bible Study	6 12:00 pm Ladies Lunch 6:30 pm NA 6:00 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Voices of Praise Choir	7 10:00 am Al Anon 7:00 pm AA	8 10:00 am Brown Bag Ministry 2:00 pm Shiloh Choir 7:00 pm AA
9 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Worship 10:00 am Augsburg Class 11:00 am Traditional Worship 12:30 pm Congregation Council 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Training 5:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Y12SR	10 1:30 pm Staff 6:00 pm Stephen Ministry	11 11:00 am Saints & Sinners 6:00 pm Gathering of Grievers 6:00 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Preschool Board 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	12 10:30 am Bible Study 6:45 pm Bible Study	13 1:00 am Quilting Group 6:30 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 pm NA 7:00 pm Voices of Praise Choir	14 10:00 am Al Anon 4:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm AA	15 2:00 pm Shiloh Choir 7:00 pm AA
16 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Worship 10:00 am Augsburg Class 11:00 am Traditional Worship 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3:30 pm Family Ministry 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Training 5:00 pm Handbells 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Y12SR	17 1:30 pm Staff	18 9:30 am Breakfast Group 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	19 10:30 am Bible Study 6:45 pm Bible Study	20 6:00 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 pm NA 7:00 pm Voices of Praise Choir	21 10:00 am Al Anon 7:00 pm AA	22 10:00 am Brown Bag Ministry 2:00 pm Shiloh Choir 7:00 pm AA
23 9:00 am Crossing Contemporary Worship 10:15 am Congregation Annual Meeting 11:00 am Traditional Worship 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Training 5:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Y12SR	24 1:30 pm Staff 7:00 pm Worship & Music	25 10:00 am Book Club 6:30 pm Pub Ministry 6:30 pm Fellowship Supper 6:00 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm Boy Scouts	26 10:30 am Bible Study 6:45 pm Bible Study	27 10:00 am Quilting Group 6:00 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 pm NA 7:00 pm Voices of Praise Choir	28 10:00 am Al Anon 4:30 pm Girl Scouts 7:00 pm AA	



WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning Worship

9:00 am – Crossing Contemporary

11:00 am – Traditional style

In Person, Zoom, Facebook, YouTube

Rev. Tim Poston
Senior Pastor
Pastor@st-philip.org

Kai Thurow
Outreach & Youth Ministries
Coordinator
Kai@st-philip.org

Regan Wang
Director of Worship & Music
Ministries
Regan@st-Philip.org

919-846-2992
www.St-Philip.org

Jane Gue
Office Administrator
admin@st-philip.org

Office Hours:
Mon, Wed, & Fri (In person)
9:00 – 4:00
Tues, & Thurs (Virtual)
9:00 – 4:00

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Church, Raleigh



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[stplcraleigh](#)



St. Philip Lutheran Church

7304 Falls of Neuse Road
Raleigh, NC 27615
919-846-2992

www.St-Philip.org



WE SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST!

Did You Know?

**PERSONS OF AFRICAN
DESCENT WERE PART OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN THE NORTHERN
COLONIES SINCE PALM
SUNDAY, 1699.**

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH
SOUTHEASTERN PA SYNOD, ELCA