

The EPISTLE

March, 2025

St. Philip Lutheran Church



Pastor's Message

Recently we had a prayer request submitted to our Prayer List for a couple “as they separate and prepare for divorce.” Divorce is one of life’s greatest pains, and many in our congregation have experienced that, including me. Thank you very much for praying for them and also, as the prayer request stated, “respecting their privacy.”

The reason I am writing this is because of the epiphany I had when I first saw the prayer request. It leapt out at me because of its different nature. Suddenly, I realized that almost ALL of our requests on the Prayer List – and likewise for all of the other three congregations I’ve served – have to do with physical sickness and death. That is overwhelmingly the case. Why is that, I wondered? Why do we rarely if ever see requests concerning separation, divorce, addiction, abuse, depression, etc.? I had to conclude – at least in part – that physical sickness and death happen frequently and indiscriminately. It’s not anyone’s fault; there’s no one to blame. These things just happen. And so we pray for those in need of physical health and healing, and we pray for those who grieve the loss of a loved one due to physical death.

We keep emotional pain and suffering at a distance. At the most, we might approach it (in terms of a prayer request) as a generic plea for “comfort and peace.” Until now, I’ve never seen a Prayer List request for someone undergoing divorce. My divorces never made a Prayer List. Personally, I was ashamed and felt like a failure on several levels. It’s unsettling enough that people must know about it. But to put it in print? To “advertise” it? No thank you. The reality is that people judge. People gossip.

Who did what? Was someone unfaithful? If so, whom? And not just “people” in general. Christians. Members of your own congregation. And that’s just divorce. What about other mental or emotional struggles, such as addiction, abuse, and depression (realizing they all may have physical consequences)? Unlike simply physical suffering, someone may be at fault – there may be someone to blame. Unlike physical suffering, these other forms of suffering don’t necessarily “just happen.”

So I worry if, as Christians, we inadvertently deem some pain and suffering as “acceptable” for the Prayer List, and other pain and suffering “unacceptable” and hence relegated to private suffering. If so, that’s an indictment on us. We may not want to publish some of our personal suffering on a public forum, but we ought not be made to feel embarrassed or ashamed of matters such as separation, divorce, addiction, abuse, depression.

We ought not have others – especially our fellow church members – speculate, question, and gossip amongst each other about these matters. We are all human, we all go through terrible seasons of life, and we all worship and serve a God who loves all God’s children unconditionally and eternally. So we ought to be able to share our pain and grief without fear of judgment from others. That is a part of our high calling.

On a final note, many feel awkward as to what to say to someone who is suffering grievously. As a general rule, the less said, the better. But you know what goes a LONG way? “I am so, so sorry. Please know that I love you.” That’s it.

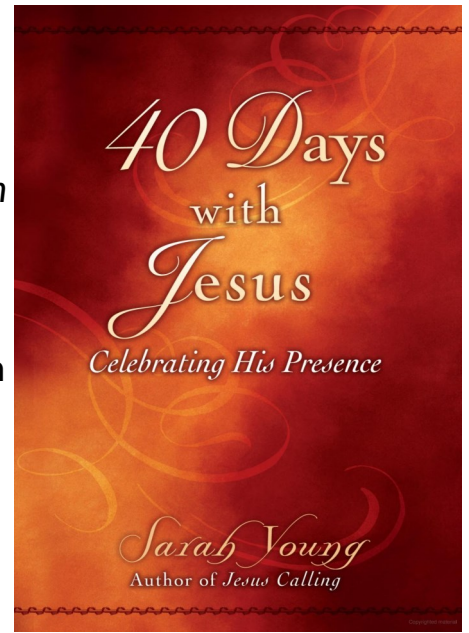
Let’s REALLY Share the Love of Christ,
Pastor Tim

Lent 2025

Join in the church wide use of these devotions celebrating Jesus' presence in our lives as we journey to the cross and His resurrection.

Written as if Jesus is speaking to you personally, *40 Days with Jesus* is designed to help you deepen your relationship with God. Each day of the journey will offer you a reminder that He is always with you. These excerpts from *Jesus Calling* and *Jesus Lives* by Sarah Young, bring to light that we can live each day aware of Jesus' presence.

May the 40 days we spend reading this booklet draw us closer to the Savior and strengthen our relationship with Him. May your time be blessed and your spirit renewed, may you be transformed, challenged, and restored. And may your life be immeasurably enriched by the One who gave it all—for you.



Fasting and Feasting

During Lent, consider this practical — and biblical — advice from Arthur Lichtenberger, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church:

Fast from criticism, and feast on praise.

Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy.

Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.

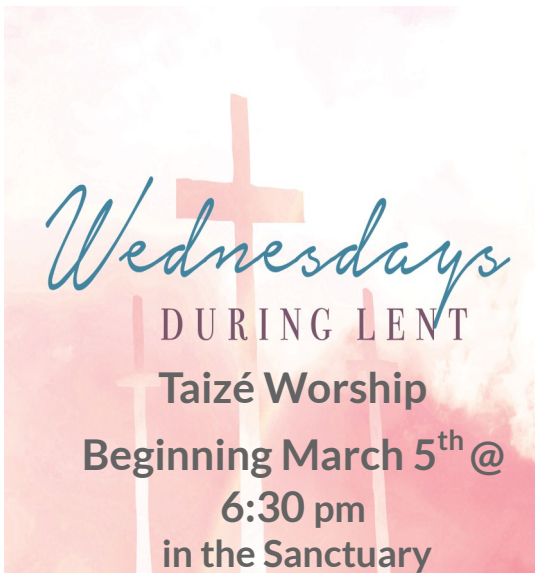
Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment.

Fast from jealousy, and feast on love.

Fast from pride, and feast on humility.

Fast from selfishness, and feast on service.

Fast from fear, and feast on faith.



FAMILY & FRIENDS ALL WELCOME



A Gathering of Grievors 'Chat & Chew'

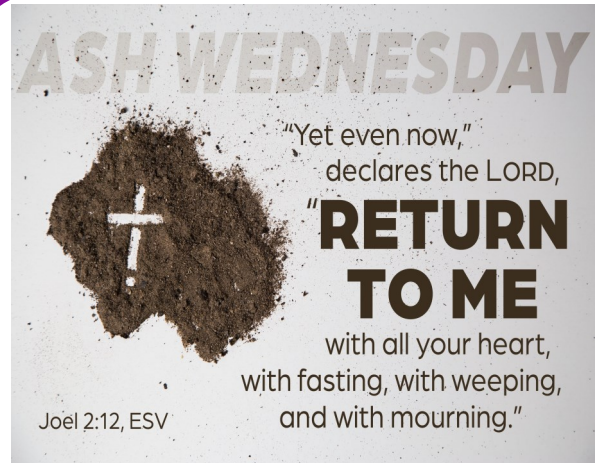
Grab dinner or just bring a snack and join us in the Music Room on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm.

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, March 11, 2025 from 6-7:30 pm



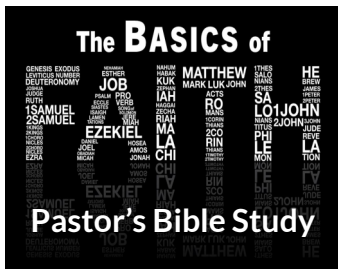
Worship Services with the Imposition of Ashes Wednesday, March 5th 1:00 pm & 7:00 pm.

Ash Wednesday is the Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter and the first day of Lent. The day is named for the practice of imposing ashes, a practice that many Lutheran congregations have found to be a very meaningful part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy.

Using ashes as a sign of repentance is an ancient practice, often mentioned in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; Matthew 11:21). The early Christians adopted the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence.

~ELCA

The evening service will be streamed to Zoom, Facebook, & YouTube



On Wednesdays During Lent at 10:30 am & 7:00 pm in the music room.

Our topics include 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!

Outreach Highlights

NEW! Refugee Hope Partners (RHP) Volunteer Orientation Training March 9



Our ministry partner, RHP, is in need of more volunteers to help in a variety of places, but the most pressing need at the moment is having more volunteers who are able to help with their Homework Help Program, specifically on Tuesday's and Thursday's from 4:30-6:00pm.

Volunteers are welcome to help when they are available and are not required to be there every single week.

All new volunteers need to go through RHP's Volunteer Orientation Training which will be hosted here at St. Philip on Sunday, March 9 between our two worship services from 10am-11am in the Music Room.

There is also another opportunity for the training taking place at the RHP Welcome Center on Wednesday, March 5 from 6:30-7:30pm if you cannot make the one on March 9.

If you are interested in learning more about RHP, or in potentially being a volunteer, please consider attending this free training. If you have any questions and/or would like to attend, please contact Kai@st-philip.org

Fighting Hunger and Food Insecurity: Letter Writing Campaign (March 9 - 30)



In January, [Bread for the World](#) hosted a symposium in Raleigh where participants had an opportunity to learn more about the causes of hunger in our community, how our neighbors being hungry is a choice we make as a society through policy choices and not from an actual lack of food, and how we can work towards helping to alleviate hunger and food insecurity.

One of the macro-level tasks we can all easily participate in to help alleviate hunger and food insecurity is through advocacy by encouraging our elected officials to consider policies that help to end hunger in our communities. One of the most effective ways to encourage our elected representatives to fight hunger and rising food insecurity is to write good-old-fashioned "snail-mail" letters. Letters are far less likely to be dismissed or ignored by representatives and seem to often be weighted more heavily than an email or a text message.

As people of faith, we are called to give of our time, talent, and treasure for a greater purpose. This letter writing campaign, in partnership with Bread for the World, invites you to use your voice to help alleviate hunger and food insecurity in our city, county, state, nation, and the world.

Starting on Sunday, March 9 we will have some sample letters available for anyone wanting to join the effort. You can mail your own letter directly to your representatives or you can turn your letters back into the church office and we'll mail them for you.

For questions, please contact either Kai Thurow at kai@st-philip.org or Janet Kraatz at janetconst@msn.com, who has graciously offered to help coordinate this effort.

St. Philip's Brown Bag Ministry (BBM) Needs Your Help

In our effort to help reduce rising food insecurity in our community, our BBM needs your help.

Due to some changing circumstances BBM is in desperate need of help to make sure we have enough food for the lunches that get packed twice a month.

Every 2nd and 4th Saturday, our BBM packs 430 meals that are then delivered to Refugee Families in our community. Each lunch that is packed includes a sandwich, fruit, a salty snack, and a sweet snack.

Beginning this coming Sunday (March 2) there will be donation collection bins available for you to drop off any of the following items for an ongoing basis. Each Saturday before a BBM Saturday, we will send an email asking for additional help if it looks like we will not have enough donations for that packing day.

Items we need help collecting:

- ♥ **FRUIT:** Apples; Oranges, and Bananas work best. Bananas are the cheapest, but don't last as long (which is OK if people are donating them shortly before a BBM Sat.)
- ♥ **SALTY SNACK:** Chips; Cheese Crackers; Pretzels; Popcorn
(we try to avoid Peanut Butter Crackers since the sandwiches are often PB Sandwiches)
- ♥ **SWEET SNACK:** Granola bars; Cookies; etc.

We're also working on creating an online shopping list so that you could order items and have them shipped directly to the church. Keep an eye out for that to go live in the near future.

If you have any questions or are interested in volunteering, please reach out to either Stacey Bell at raleighbells@gmail.com or to Kai Thurow at Kai@st-philip.org



Brown Bag Ministry
Let hope fly



FAMILIES TOGETHER
a PLM organization

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”
- ♥ **Refugee Hope Partners**—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** – 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

Family Ministry March Calendar

(Families with children Grade 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!

3/9 – Family Ministry w/ Dinner 3:30-5pm

3/23 – Family Ministry w/ Dinner 3:30-5pm

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

Youth Group March Calendar

(Grades 5-12)



3/23 – Pizza & Movie Night 6:00-8:00pm

We'll have some Pizza, Popcorn, and Movie in the Fellowship Hall! Feel free to wear PJ's, and bring a pillow/blanket/stuffed animals to help you be comfy during the movie!

Youth Group Highlight

Our youth group recently went to Buffaloe Lanes North for an evening of fun and bowling together!



100 New Blessing Bags Packed

Our Youth Group (grades 5-12) packed 100 Blessing Bags which can be found near the entrances of the worship and office buildings at St. Philip. Each bag has multiple different types of non-perishable food. Feel free to grab a Blessing Bag to carry in your vehicle.

The hope is that these bags can be given to those in our community who are asking for help on the streetcorners we pass as we're driving. Treating people with dignity and respect goes a long way towards recognizing Christ in each of us.



Save the Date!
AKB MINISTRIES'
15TH ANNUAL
GOLF OUTING

Support a great cause while enjoying the fun and fellowship of a day on the Lochmere Golf Club course on **May 19th.**

INTERESTED?
Contact
[John Sullivan](mailto:John.Sullivan@st-philip.org) for
more information
jsull77@gmail.co

SAINTS & SINNERS

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

You can expect a delicious lunch prepared by our own Debbie Coccarelli and an interesting program. This month the program will be about the Iceland trip taken by Martha, Carole and Frank with lots of pictures and comments and answers for questions for people who are interested in going. It is the place to go this year. It seems for a lot of people. Everyone is welcome to come!
Please RSVP for planning purposes to Carole Mason at 919-210-0727.

In February we had a good turn out to hear Maggie Kane from A Place at the Table a pay-as-you-can café in Raleigh.



Men's Pub Ministry We met on Tuesday, February 25th at Saints and Scholars Pub with one of the largest gatherings in our history to honor the passing of our esteemed leader, Dave Wahlstrom. A moment of silence was followed by many of our members speaking of Dave's impact on their lives and the lives of everyone he knew. Ron Parmeter presented a special memorial picture for all to sign. Joe Edwards was elected leader of the Men's Pub and agreed to do so. Bill Dotson, Scott Simerly, and Ed Voress will help develop future activities and service projects. Fellowship and service will be our focus moving forward. All men of St. Philip are invited to join us on the fourth Tuesday of each month to share food, drink, and camaraderie.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, March 25th at Vivo Ristorante at 6:30PM.



St. Philip Lutheran Preschool

February was filled with LOVE as we celebrated Valentine's Day showing our friends and families lots of love in many ways! At the end of the month, we began learning about those that help us in our community. A dental hygienist and dentist visited our classes and taught us how to take care of our teeth. It was lots of FUN!!

In March, we will continue learning about more community helpers as paramedics from Wake County EMS will visit us and we will look inside the ambulance, too! Also, we will visit Fire Station 22 and learn about fire safety!! We will have "Character Day" and dress up as a character from our favorite storybook, parade around the school, enjoy singing songs and reading books with our friends!

Registration for the 2025-2026 school year is ongoing! Some of the classes are filled but if you or a friend would be interested in attending next year, please contact us at 919-870-5841 or 919-818-9585. We have wonderful nurturing teachers, large classrooms, and an atmosphere of love and caring!

Thank you ALL for your continued support, prayers, and love for the preschool!!

Faith & Fellowship

Monthly Breakfast Group—

Tuesday, March 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, March 6th at Bahama Breeze on Wake Forest Dr.

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

Every 1st Thursday!
Hope to see you there!



We will meet on Tuesday—3/25/25 @ 6:30 pm at the Hibernian Pub

Questions? contact Carol Rogers parakayaker@gmail.com

Everyone is invited!!

Pub Ministry

The Pub Ministry Group will meet on Tuesday, March 25th, 6:30 pm at Vivo Ristorante. Everyone is welcome! Let Joe Edwards know if you plan to attend for reservations. edwardsja@aol.com

Adult Book Club

Everyone is welcome!

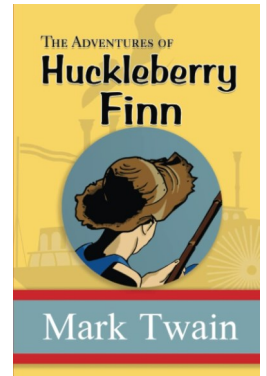
Our next meeting is on Tuesday, 3/25 at 10am in the Parlor. We will be discussing *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (Then in March we will discuss *James: A Novel* by Percival Everett. We will see how their two perspectives differ.).

After he and his good buddy Tom Sawyer had uncovered a small fortune, Huckleberry Finn finds himself restrained by the demands of an overbearing guardian. Never one to be confined by the proprieties of society, Huck bolts from this dull life in pursuit of a more exciting and mischievous life.

Witty and poignant, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is often cited as the preeminent “Great American Novel.” So join this willful vagabond as he sails down the Mighty Mississippi and discovers one thrilling adventure followed by another.

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,

On behalf of the Finance Committee, I am pleased to provide this initial report to kick off 2025. The surge in giving late last year resulting from your overwhelming generosity meant that we continued our multi-year trend of meeting or exceeding our financial plan. I am excited to tell you that we've also gotten off to a very good start this year.

Through the first month, our income was \$57,530, or \$5,011 above plan, and the highest income for January in at least five years. Expenses were \$62,754, or \$5,160 above plan. However, this expense overage was largely due to the fact that we made the full payment for our annual HVAC service contract rather than paying it monthly over the course of the year.

Thank you for all you do! Please continue your generous support of our ministries at St. Philip so we can grow in our calling to serve our Lord and His people.

Blessings,
Jim Beck, Finance Chair

January 2025

Giving						
	Actual	Plan	%			
January 2025	\$ 57,530	\$ 52,519	110%			
Year to Date	\$ 57,530	\$ 52,519	110%			
Category	Current Month Actual	Current Month Plan	%	YTD Actual	YTD Plan	%
Income						
General Fund	\$ 54,225	\$ 45,000	120%	\$ 54,225	\$ 45,000	121%
Other Income	\$ 3,305	\$ 7,519	44%	\$ 3,305	\$ 7,519	44%
Total Income	\$ 57,530	\$ 52,519	110%	\$ 57,530	\$ 52,519	110%
Expenses						
	\$ 62,754	\$ 57,594	109%	\$ 62,754	\$ 57,594	109%
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ (5,224)	\$ (5,075)		\$ (5,224)	\$ (5,075)	

The 2024 Annual Budgeted Revenue needed to meet expenses is \$636,624

Mark Your Calendars!
Property Spring Work Day
Saturday April 5th 8:30–12 noon



March

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 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Trng. 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 Ash Wednesday 9:30 am Senior Adult Ministry 1:00 pm Worship 7:00 pm Worship	6 12:00 pm Ladies Lunch 6:00 pm Girl Scouts 6:30 pm NA 6:30 pm Finance 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 RHP Volunteer Training 10:00 am Augsburg Class 11:00 am Traditional Worship 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3L30 pm Family Ministry 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Trng. 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 6:30 pm Taizé Service 7:00 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 9:00 am Council Retreat 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 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Trng. 5:00 pm Handbells 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 6:30 pm Taizé Service 7:00 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 10:00 am Augsburg Class 11:00 am Traditional Worship 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3:30 pm Family Ministry 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Trng. 5:00 pm Handbells 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Y12SR	24 1:30 pm Staff	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 6:30 pm Taizé Service 7:00 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	29 2:00 pm Shiloh Choir 7:00 pm AA
30 10:00 am One United Worship 1:30 pm Shiloh Restoration 3:45 pm Stephen Ministry Trng. 5:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Y12SR	31 1:30 pm Staff 7:00 pm Worship & Music					



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

[Facebook](#)
St. Philip Lutheran
Church, Raleigh



Twitter
[@St_PhilipELCA](#)



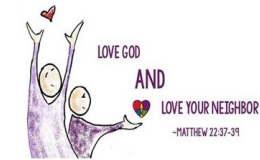
[Instagram](#)
[stplcraleigh](#)



St. Philip Lutheran Church

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Raleigh, NC 27615
919-846-2992

www.St-Philip.org



WE SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST!

“Blessed
is the
one
who comes
in the
name
of the
Lord!”