

# LIFE @ ST. PHILIP'S

St. Philip's Lutheran Church | Toronto, ON

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## Save the Dates:

- Dec. 2** – Christmas Market
- Dec. 13** – 50+ Christmas Lunch
- Dec. 16** – Christmas Pageant with Joyful Noise Bell Choir & Potluck Luncheon
- Dec. 21** – Blue Christmas/ Longest Night
- Dec. 23** – Cantata
- Dec. 24** – Christmas Eve services (4:30 p.m. & 9 p.m.)



## From Pastor Tuula ...

A character in John Updike's *Bech Is Back* describes his wife's religion this way: "Many of her crowd went to church as faithfully as they played tennis and golf and attended rallies to keep out developers. Yet, their God, for all his colourful history and spangled attributes, lay above the earth like a layer of icy cirrus, a tenacious and diffident other whose tendrils failed to entwine with fibrous blood and muscle."

Updike puts his finger on important theological questions: Is God distant? Does our religion operate by the same rules as culture?

There was a time when I thought it was important that during Advent we study Christianity's intellectual claims about Jesus. I even thought it would be good to have an Advent Bible study on the fourth-century controversies about whether Jesus was of the "similar substance" or the "same substance" as God. (There is only a one letter difference in the Greek words, and seminary students lose a lot of sleep trying to remember which is which.)

As I have gotten older, I now know that Advent is not the time to address these issues. Most everyone is frazzled and distracted and worried not so much about the defining relations in the Trinity as they are about getting their shopping and cooking done, and whether they receive their packages on time during the postal strike.

Understanding is not the issue at Christmas. The issue is trust – and peace and hope. And you do not get those by someone explaining intellectual distinctions. They come through relationships.

When my children were young and asked me difficult and sometimes frightening questions, they really did not want a reasonable answer. They wanted a hug. They needed assurance that they were not alone in facing whatever it was they were facing.

Christmas tells us that there is one who cares about us and comes to be with us. The simple story means that in this huge universe, in this frightening world, we are never alone. It means that God cares about how life is lived in the world. Jesus knew what it means to be tired and hungry and lonely, and he also knew what it means to be happy and loved and hopeful.

The birth of Jesus contradicts the idea of a God who "lay above the earth like a layer of icy cirrus." Instead, we encounter God, not in fancy theology but in our enjoyment of beauty, friendship, and love. This is not a God "whose tendrils failed to entwine with fibrous blood and muscle." Quite the opposite. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

See you in church,

Pastor Tuula

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## Council News

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The November meeting was to be dedicated to *Rethinking Council* and how we organize at St. Philip's. The early snow storm that happened that day forced a change in plans. The plan was for Sheila Hamilton to share some of her knowledge on how other congregations are organized



and then guide us through discussions on possibilities for change at St. Philip's. We haven't given up on the discussion but had to postpone it.

The agenda change offered the opportunity to speak to other things. We now have a documented approach to HR Management for St. Philip's and staff. And we welcome **Donna Schwantes as our HR Coordinator**. Thanks, Donna, for sharing your wealth of knowledge and experience in this capacity. This was an important step in preparing for a new staff member. The new position, Learning and Engagement Coordinator, is posted and we have many interested applicants. Given the timing, interviewing will happen in January. This children, youth and family focused position opens so many possibilities for things to happen in 2019! The posting is available on our website - check it out and pass it on if you know a qualified candidate.

And with the new year will also come a new Council. Council members serve 3-year terms and a third of the members are replaced each year. The **Nominations** Committee is headed up by Bonnie Erlandson this year. Are you interested in supporting the Vision and work of St. Philip's as part of the leadership team? Give it some prayerful consideration. Council is evolving and looking for members to be a part of building us up for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

November has been Stewardship month. We have indeed been *Freed by Grace - to Live Generously*. To show our gratitude for your generosity, Council sponsored the **All-Star Café** on Nov. 25. We hope you enjoyed our take on a coffee shop and the "Stars of St. Philip's" awards. We extend our thanks to all who helped with stewardship month and all who recommitted. You are all stars of St. Philip's because of your generosity. Come build the church with us! -Karen Adolph



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## Next Council Meeting:

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**Thursday, Dec. 13 @ 7 p.m.**

Please feel free to discuss your concerns with any of the following Church Council members:

- Marcia Powers-Dunlop, Chair
- Karen Adolph, Vice Chair
- Elisabeth van Rensburg, Secretary
- Anne Bindernagel, Andrew Davies, Bonnie Erlandson, Samantha Gauthier, Sam Marcuson, Paul Noack, Stephanie Roche, Melissa Veniot, Tina Werner.

## Stewardship Month at St. Philip's

With the turn of the calendar to December, our Stewardship month has ended. But your stewardship continues. We hope you were inspired by the bulletin inserts, the "moments" at worship, the movie, and information provided. To continue to build up this church to do the work we have envisioned requires your support. How did you like our photo journal? And the All-Star Café? Initially it was Tim Horton's coffee that was popular, but Starbucks took over and appears to be the coffee of choice. We couldn't give an "award" to everyone but know that you too are a star of St. Philip's. Whether you count the offering, teach Sunday School, or keep us in your prayers - whatever you do is appreciated.

We are grateful for the generosity of our members. We are richly blessed - indeed an All-Star Team! Thank you to everyone who returned the commitment forms. (You still can). We appreciate that each person gives according to the gifts they have received. And together we have built a church. We have been "freed by Grace to live generously"! -Karen Adolph

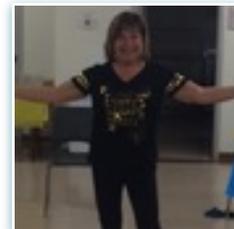
*Freed by Grace*  
 – *to Live Generously*  
 Asking every member for renewed commitment



*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to*  
**SERVE OTHERS,**  
*as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*  
 1 Peter 4:10



**SENIORS' GENTLE FITNESS RETURNS :** Join Julia Gall for an hour at St. Philip's on Mondays at 1 p.m.



### CROWDFUNDING FOR MARK

Mark Kieswetter, former Music Director, has a GoFundMe page. If you are interested in helping to fund him, please visit the website: <https://www.gofundme.com/some-help-for-mark>

*(Photo courtesy of B. Beard Photography)*

**Julia Gall has certification in Pilates, Aquatics and Zumba especially Zumba Gold which is specifically for the active older adults. It is her favourite because it is so much fun with exciting music to easy dances from all over the world. The emphasis in class is on strength, balance and coordination that is fun and easy and guaranteed to make you feel wonderful! Julia is fully licensed, insured and certified. She also has her CPR and first aid renewed yearly.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME. PLEASE JOIN US!**

**\$10 FOR 4 SESSIONS**

**STARTS DECEMBER 10**

## Financial Update

There's been a lot of discussion over the last month about stewardship and the many ways we at St Philip's contribute to its faith life. We all do it!

That's what makes the St. Philip's family such a wonderful institution. The sharing of our skills and time, our devotion to each other and the surrounding community all go together to create the whole. Not surprisingly, the sharing of our wealth is also a significant piece of the total picture.

We at St. Philip's are an ambitious bunch! Music! Choirs - voice and bell! Community outreach! Tutoring! Book club. Youth! Sunday school! Senior's exercise! Food market! 50+! Cover girls! Bible studies! . . . and on it goes. It's wonderful to see our talents and assets being so well utilized.

It goes without saying, however, that both talent and assets cost money. Witness our status on Oct. 31. Our income, year to date, was \$164,266. Our expenses to that point were \$195,395. That's a deficit of \$31,129! That same number one year ago was a deficit of \$9,802.

Our biggest cost is payroll. (71% of our total expense) Talent costs! The next biggest cost is the building. (17% of our total expense) Assets cost! And when we talk dollars and cents, we shouldn't forget our commitment to Synod. Our Benevolence giving to Oct. 31 is \$22,541. Our 2018 commitment is \$30,000.

Speak to someone on the Finance Committee if you have questions or comments. They are Dave Brown, Rob Jacksteit, Gary Wuschnakowski, Alan Walker and Jim Rouse. Council's liaison to the committee is Sam Marcuson.

*-Jim Rouse*



## Jordan's Update

Carols, cows, poetry, and chaos. These four words (and weak attempt at alliteration) all describe the Christmas Pageant happening on Dec. 16. A script has been prepared and music has been selected. All that is left is some preparation with the Sunday School on the first two Sundays of December and then the exciting "no-rehearsal" pageant will take place.

If your family is not able to attend any of the preparations on December 2 & 9 or if you have nieces, nephews, or grandchildren that might want to be a part of the pageant, I encourage everyone to show up for 9:30 a.m. on Sunday the 16th. Roles will be assigned and our skilled worship and narrator team will guide us through the story of the season.

Living and experiencing the Christmas story each year helps us to grow in our life of faith. Whether you are a child participating in acting out the tale or an adult participating in the Advent Bible study, the four Sundays leading up to Christmas provide a way for us to be formed for the coming celebration on Dec. 25 and the year ahead. Blessings for your Advent Season and I hope to see many of you on Dec. 16.

*-Jordan Smith*

## 50+

Join us **Thursday, Dec. 13 @ 12 p.m.**



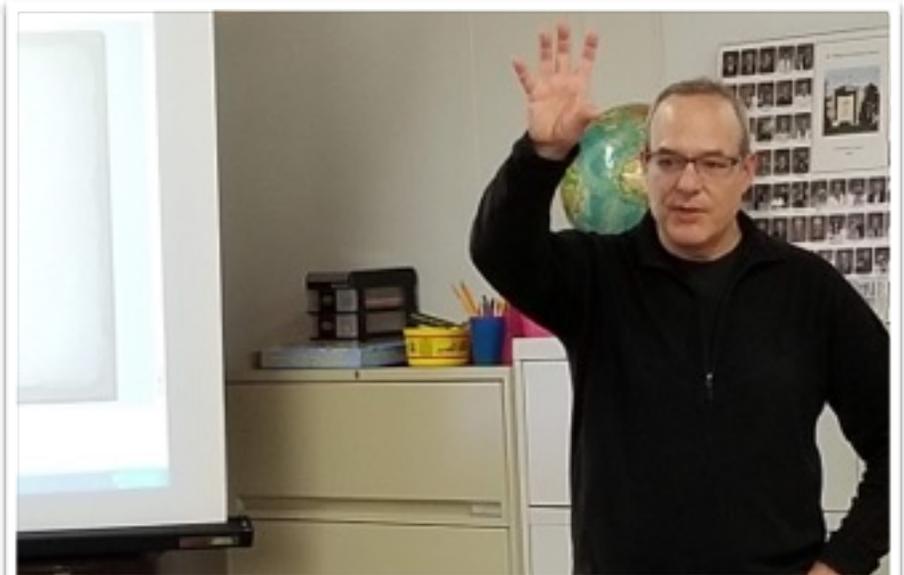
*It's time for our annual Christmas Luncheon with concert by "New Horizons Band"!*

### SPLC Book Club

Please join us on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 12:30 p.m. to review the latest book. We welcome new members at any time.

## Captured!

Last month was action-packed. 50+ speaker, Ken Purvis, Museum Co-ordinator from Montgomery's Inn, gave an engaging and interesting talk on "Inns in Carriage Times" as he compared them to today's B&B's. Here are some various images sent in by shutterbug Janice Rouse.



## December at a Glance

Christmas is soon approaching and December will be a busy month at St. Philip's. Please join us on the following dates:

**Dec. 9:** No Fixed Address will play at Sunday Worship.

**Dec. 16:** Christmas Pageant with Joyful Noise Bell Choir and Potluck Luncheon to follow –please sign up for food items.

**Dec. 15:** In Memory of Marion

Marion Roberts passed away peacefully at the age of 93 on **Friday, Nov. 9, 2018**. She was a Charter Member of St. Philip's Lutheran Church.

Her funeral service will be held at St. Philip's on **Saturday, Dec. 15 @ 11:30 a.m.** with visitation from **10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.** A luncheon will follow the funeral service upstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

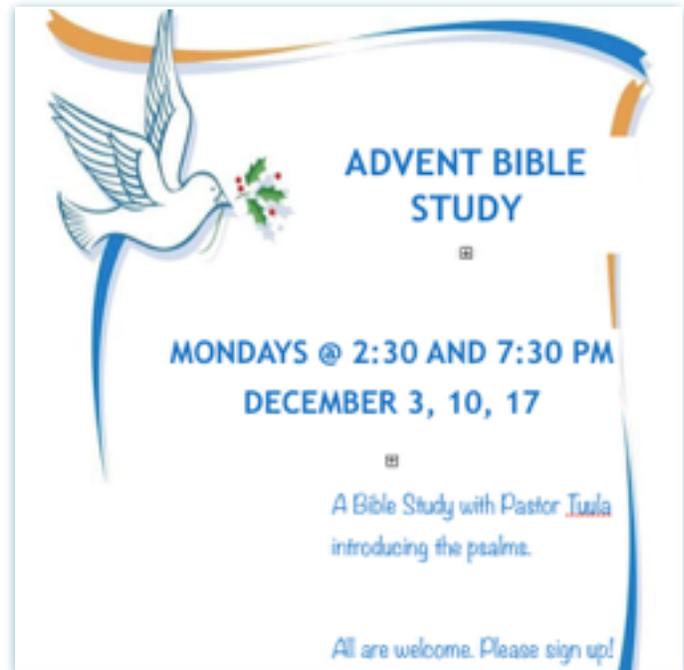
A private burial will take place in the spring.

Memorial Gifts: In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to St. Philip's Lutheran Church Memorial Fund.

Donations may be made by cheque or on line through Canada Helps at:  
[www.stphilipstoronto.com](http://www.stphilipstoronto.com)

You may also donate to the Alzheimer's Society.

The obituary will be available by the end of the week at Turner and Porter's website:  
<http://turnerporter.ca>



**Dec. 21 @ 7:30 p.m.:** A special service for people who are experiencing stress, grief, or loneliness this Christmas season. Refreshments with the pastoral care team will follow.

**Dec. 23:** Take in a lovely "Christmas Jazz Cantata" by Ken Cartwright. The musicians are as follows:

Raquel Skilich - vocalist  
Andrew McMullen - drums  
Jonas Pearson-Paavola - bass guitar

**Parable Quest:** Please join us on Sundays for a wonderful Sunday School program. We have many teachers who are keen to make Sunday School a fun and educational experience. Weekly at **10:15 a.m.** with family services on the last Sunday of the month.

St. Philip's Lutheran Church

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**Pastor Tuula Van Gaasbeek**

Phone: 416.859.5588

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**Boris Treivus, Music Director**

Phone: 416.879.8126

conductor@rogers.com

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**Mark Kieswetter, Music Director Emeritus**

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**Margaret Isaacs, Office Administrator**

Phone: 416.622.5577

stphilip@bellnet.ca

Office is usually open on Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m.

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**Contextual Placement Students**

Victoria Mlynko: 416.312.1143

Jordan Smith: 416.356.3505

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'Friend' us on Facebook.

Instagram/Twitter: @SPLConline

**ANGEL TREE** Angel Tree has been set up in the narthex. Please take an angel from the tree and bring gifts by Dec. 16.

**HAMPERS:** 8 Benevolent Hampers will be created by Margaret Isaacs from Outreach Funds. She sees to their needs throughout the year with the use of vouchers and food bank items.

**HOLIDAYS:** Pastor Tuula will be away from Dec. 25 to Jan. 4. Please contact Rev. Susan Climo for any pastoral care issues at 905.625.6650.

**Next issue of LIFE**

Please submit articles for the next issue of LIFE by Dec. 27 ... send good news to [rochekel@gmail.com](mailto:rochekel@gmail.com)

***About St. Philip's - Our Vision***

Freed by the grace of Christ, we seek to connect with God, neighbour, and self.

**Vision Statement:** We are a diverse and inclusive Lutheran faith community freed by the grace of Christ to find God and self as we connect with our neighbours.

We practise hospitality of open hearts and open arms. We unite with partners to make a difference in our neighbourhood. We nurture community of Christ.

**Values Supporting the Vision:** Our Lutheran heritage of grace; our call to pray, worship, and learn as we grow in our Christian faith; our needs to gather and belong in Christian community; the call to love our neighbours as Christ loves us; the acceptance of all people as children of God; the opportunities to meet God everywhere.