

LIFE @ ST. PHILIP'S

St. Philip's Lutheran Church | Toronto, ON

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Save the Dates:

- May 3** – SPY Sleepover
- May 4** – SPY Pix in the 6ix Scavenger Hunt
- May 9** – 50+ Tour; Council
- May 15** – SPLC Book Club
- May 27** – LIFE newsletter deadline
- May 30** – Iftar Dinner



From Pastor Tuula ...

Does prayer work? That's the question many people ask me when they perceive that God is not answering their prayers. There are other questions that surface also: Is prayer worthwhile? Does it change anything? Am I talking to myself? Does God care about my prayers?

I have started to tell people that we need to change the way we talk about prayer. We can begin by eliminating the use of the word 'answer' from references to prayer outcomes. The word doesn't fit well conceptually, and it makes us believe in an interpretation of prayer that leans heavily toward self-interest. After all, prayer is not mostly about us.

At its most fundamental level, prayer is conversation with God, and conversations aren't about answers. Conversations engage a relationship. They involve give-and-take and the sharing of company. Deep conversations inspire curiosity and they foster honesty.

Some people suggest that the first purpose of prayer is to know God. I rather think it is to enjoy God. Prayer is really no more complicated than picking up on a relationship already in progress. Robert Farrar Capon put it this way: "Prayer is just talking to someone who is already talking to you. [It's] listening to someone who is already listening to you."

Once we discover that the greatest benefit of prayer is intimacy with God, the relationship becomes deeper than one that's organized around having our desires met. The more persistently we hang in there with prayer, the more we encounter a God who does not provide an answer to our every want, but who offers strength for our every need.

Requests certainly have their place in honest prayer.

"Let your requests be made known to God," writes the apostle Paul. But we shouldn't confuse the value of prayer requests with a listing of personal wants.

In the end prayer is about putting away our search for answers long enough to enjoy the Lord in a new and freeing way. I am thinking of Jane. She was a parishioner in my internship congregation in New York who was terminally ill. Sometimes when I visited her in the hospital, she prayed; at other times I took the lead. Even though Jane's voice and body weakened as the weeks passed, her eyes kept their glow and her mind its spark. "Tuula," she said to me one day, "I don't see myself getting better. How about we skip the prayer for healing today? I just want you to pray for Jesus not to leave me. That's all I need now – the close company of God."

Jane died 20 years ago. Her rich prayer instincts continue to nurture my love for God.

See you in church,
Pastor Tuula

Council Update

Council now meets on the second Thursday of the month and our last meeting was April 11, 2019. Plans are being made for a Council retreat at the end of May. In addition, the hosting of the Maundy Thursday soup supper was discussed. Council is currently considering, in consultation with the Property Committee, a request from a



congregation of the United Church of God to use our sanctuary and fellowship hall on Saturdays, effective June 2019. Further information will be provided when it is available. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with any member of council. -Donna Schwantes

Celebrations in Our Fellowship Hall

From baby showers to birthdays and other special events, our facilities (including the sanctuary and rooms in the basement) can be rented out to the public. Sonja S. chose our venue to host an event for her grandchildren's shower (twins!!) on March 30. It's easy to book – rental details and forms are [on our website](#).



Pink-themed images are via Bonnie Erlandson from March 16. Congratulations to all!



Captured!

We had a full house on Easter Sunday, and the weeks leading up to it have been action-packed. Here are some great images from Evangel Hall, Good Friday Egg Colouring, and Easter Sunday.



On Serving ...

We donned hairnets, rolled up our sleeves, debated where to place brownies, and worked in tandem to dole out an absolutely delicious meatloaf dinner at Evangel Hall. About a dozen of us got together on April 7 for the downtown event. In addition to a hot meal in the dining area, we also prepared takeout containers for those on the go. Leftovers were stored for use the next day. Our youth (Alexa, Chantal, Emily and Vashti) demonstrated a superb work ethic and attitude, to no one's surprise. Overall, it was strong teamwork – splitting up kitchen duties, dishing food, serving, cleanup. Execution of the event was flawless, and hopefully we did Pastor Tuula proud in representing St. Philip's. Oh, and Doris' coleslaw was a huge hit!

-Kelly Roche



Gratitude & Kindness

My mom looks up to me because she has to – I'm about three inches taller. But the truth is, I admire her for so many reasons, namely her beauty. Only as I approach 40 am I realizing the depths of her grace, far beyond that gorgeous face. It's her heart which fills me with awe and admiration. My mom gives first, asks questions later. She was raised to lead a faith-filled, disciplined life: Feed the hungry, clothe the poor, be kind, humble and of service at all times. These lessons –and sacrifices–provide a baseline for the type of woman I strive to be ... and there's plenty of work to do. Her birthday typically falls on or around Mother's Day (this year it's May 12). I could buy her another gift but thought a little surprise in the newsletter would be more meaningful. Mom, you're my hero.
-Kelly Roche.

Proverbs 31:28

Her children arise and call her blessed ...



50+

Join us **Thursday, May 9 @ 10:30 a.m.** 50+ Tour of 50+ Tour of Jewish Synagogue: Knesseth Israel.

Please sign up to attend and/or arrange carpooling!

Happy Anniversary ...

8th - Luke & Frances Selby
12th - Astor & Mary Hanslep
12th - Doug & Wendy Kearns
13th - Jim & Janice Rouse
16th - Kathy & Rick Gorski
26th - Alison & Kevin Eiben
28th - Peter & Colleen Hillerup



SPLC Book Club

Please join us on Wednesday, May 15 at 12:30 p.m. to review the latest book. We welcome new members at any time!



May at a Glance

May flowers, please bloom! Summer is soon approaching, and there are plenty of events in store at St. Philip's. Please join us on the following dates:

May 3: SPY Sleepover

May 4: SPY Pix in the 6ix Scavenger Hunt

May 9: 50+ Tour @ 10:30 a.m.; Council @ 7 p.m.

May 15: SPLC Book Club

May 30: Iftar Dinner

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.



Iftar Dinner - Thursday, May 30, 2019.

An Iftar Dinner is being co-sponsored by the Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI) and St. Philip's Lutheran Church.

Topic of conversation:

"How Do We Bring Citizens into Democracy? Rights, Responsibilities, and Civic Leadership"

It's a presentation by the Samara Centre for Democracy.

Details: Thursday, May 30, 2019
Program @ 6:30 p.m.
Dinner @ 8:45 p.m. (sunset)

Location: St. Philip's Lutheran Church, 61 West Deane Park Dr. in Etobicoke.

The event is FREE to attend.

All are welcome!

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'Friend' us on Facebook.

Instagram/Twitter: @SPLConline

VICTORIA DAY CLOSURE

Reminder: The church office is closed on
Monday, May 20 for Victoria Day, reopening
Tuesday.

ABSENCE ALERTS

Pastor Tuula will be away on holidays, then at
Dubrick Summer Institute for professional
development, from May 9 until May 22. Please
contact Rev. Nadine Nicholds for pastoral
emergencies at 647.403.5545.

Office Administrator, Margaret Isaacs, will be on
holiday from April 29 to May 10 inclusive. Sarah
McCutcheon will be in the office in her absence.

Next issue of LIFE

**Please submit articles and photos for the next
issue of LIFE by May 27 ... send good news to
Kelly at 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.