

St. Philip's Lutheran Church Tidings

St. Philip's Lutheran Church
Carmel California

October-November 2023

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

New Year Greetings!

Well, at least happy new liturgical year. Starting on Sunday December 3rd the liturgical season of Advent begins. There are four Sundays in Advent. This year since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, we will celebrate three of those four Sundays. The season of Advent is intended to be a time of spiritual preparation for Christmas. But how do we do that? What sort of preparation do we need to do spiritually to prepare ourselves?

This has been a question of interest for the church throughout its history and the tone of Advent has seen many changes throughout those years. For some periods of time Advent was seen as a joyous time of preparation, focused on preparing for the celebration and feast of Christmas, while during other periods Lent was treated as a mini-Lent, a season dedicated to preparation through self-reflection on our own brokenness and our need for the Saviour Jesus Christ. So, what about now?

I like to think of Advent as a mix of both traditions. In fact, I think both approaches work well together. Advent starts with some self-reflection which I believe almost always leads to a realization of our complete dependence on God's grace shown through the birth, life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. And, then we are able to more fully celebrate the astonishing gift that all of creation received on that Christmas night more than 2,000 years ago. Through realizing the brokenness of our own natures and spirits we are better able to feel deep down the amazing gift that was, is, and continues to be God's grace delivered through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

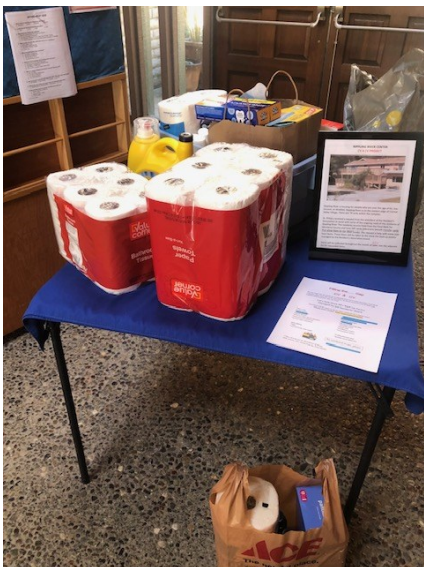
So, in this holiday season let us rejoice in our God which treats us with such amazing compassion, grace, and love, and let us challenge ourselves to be symbols of that same compassion, grace, and love.

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Tony Rhodes

INSTALLATION OF BISHOP JOHNSON

Pastor Jeff Johnson was elected to the office of Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod during the assembly in September. He took office November 1 and will be installed into the office on December 9. The installation will take place at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church in Walnut Creek from 2:00PM to 5:00PM. An RSVP is not needed but would be appreciated. RSVP at <https://bit.ly/BishopRSVP>.

Prior to his election to Bishop, Bishop Johnson served as pastor of University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley and as a member of the Spiritual Care Team at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Berkeley, since 2013. Johnson received his Bachelor of Arts in history and Bachelor of Arts in German from California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, in 1984, and his Master of Divinity from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1988. Johnson was ordained in 1990.



THANK YOU all for your contributions to the supplies for Rippling River. They have been delivered and were much appreciated. This outreach will be done again in 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING-

In preparation for the St Philips annual meeting and a new budget the council discussed a list of building maintenance items and obtaining estimates for cost of these projects. The initial list includes repair of roof leaks, outdoor painting, plum tree trimming and maintenance, and carpet cleaning. Are there other items needing attention? Please let George know.

Christmas Activities- December 3- Sanctuary Tree decorating after service 11:15am
December 16- Christmas Music Celebration, Saturday @ 3pm St Timothy

Christmas Giving opportunities- ELCA Good Gifts, I Help program, Monterey Co Food Bank, Lutheran World Relief

Discretionary Benevolence:

The first and second quarter benevolence were sent to the Monterey County Food Bank. Third quarter discretionary benevolence will be sent to support the work of Mount Cross. Fourth quarter discretionary benevolence will be allocated to i-HELP. A full report of supplemental giving for the discretionary benevolence will be available at the end of the year.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

George Isaac – president

Sharon Anderson - treasurer

Anke Richter—financial secretary

Emily Rustad

Carolyn Berry

Calling all St. Philip's members to consider serving as council Treasurer starting in 2024

The current council treasurer has served more consecutive terms on council than allowed by the St. Philip's bylaws, and is reaching the end of the allowed two terms as treasurer. If you have the SLIGHTEST inclination to CONSIDER taking on the treasurer role, please speak to Pastor Tony, Sharon Anderson, or George Isaac.

There will be other openings on the council for those who want to dip their toe in the pond (current council members will be looking for people who would be willing to serve a two-year term on council).

SUPPORT ELCA RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT WORK WITH A DONATION TO ELCA GOOD WORKS

During the holiday season, the council encourages the St. Philip's community to consider a special donation to ELCA's Relief and Development work <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development>. That work falls into four categories:

- ELCA World Hunger
- HIV and AIDS Ministry
- Lutheran Disaster Response
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

The ELCA Good gifts program <https://goodgifts.elca.org/> allows people to donate to any of those areas or identify a gift as going to the area of greatest need. Consider giving a donation in the name of a friend or family member, as a Christmas gift for that person who really doesn't need anything but you want to honor and acknowledge them at Christmas. More information will be available in the Narthex, or you can go to <https://goodgifts.elca.org/> and put a dove on the St. Philip's Christmas tree to represent your donation. If you would like to donate by writing a check to St. Philip's and have us make the donation in your name, be sure to write sufficient information in the check notes section.



These are two organizations that St. Philip's has supported for years. We now have another avenue to support them and that is through Thrivent. If you are a member of Thrivent, you collect what is known as Choice Dollars. Choice Dollars are accumulated throughout the year and can be donated to different organizations. I-Help and the Food Bank for Monterey County have been added to the list of organizations as of this fall. They are there in addition to St. Philip's and the ELCA organizations. To access your Choice Dollars, go to the Thrivent web site <http://thrivent.com>. I-Help is listed as Outreach Unlimited aka IHelp and the food bank as Food Bank for Monterey County. Monies that may be in your Choice Dollar account need to be used by March 31, 2024.

Treasurer's Report

As shown below, St. Philip's expenses exceed our income, consistent with the budget approved at a special congregational meeting in early April, 2023. If giving holds steady, and congregational members who will be away at Christmas would consider making any Christmas or year-end contributions prior to the end of the year, we will be on track to meet the targets approved by the congregation.

Jan 1 to Nov 18, 2023:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Offering: | \$128,634 |
| Other revenue: | \$2746 |
| Expenses: | \$153,276 |
| Deficit: | \$21,896 |

NOTE: A deficit of \$27,269 was approved by congregational vote when the budget was approved.

Significant unplanned expenses involve building and grounds maintenance, higher than anticipated costs for lodging at the synod assembly, and ongoing expenses related to the sound and streaming system

Other Financial information and plans:

A draft 2024 budget will be available to the congregation before the holiday. Unfortunately, the council anticipates some major facilities expenditures related to roof repair and exterior painting. This maintenance is needed to maintain the value of the building, and in an effort to avoid even larger costs in the future if essential maintenance is not completed in coming months.

We anticipate needing to tap into the Apple Stock to cover the cost of roof repair and any structural damage that is identified, and will bring forward a plan to the congregation as soon as we have more information.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON 2023

The Worship Committee met November 13th to begin preparing for the upcoming celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. The new church year begins December 3rd, the first Sunday in Advent, which means preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ. During our worship service, another candle on the Advent Wreath will be lit, until Christmas Eve, when the center white Christ candle will also be lit.

BULLETIN CHANGES:

Although we will continue using the same liturgy, there will be bulletin changes to reflect Advent thoughts during this month. A special bulletin will be used for Christmas Eve, with carols, including the traditional candlelight singing of Silent Night. Sunday, December 31st, will be a Hymn Sing Sunday, a time of worship through carols and Scripture. Beginning in January, the bulletin will use the familiar Haugen liturgy until Lent.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16TH AT 3 PM –

Afternoon of music and fellowship with St. Timothy's. A flyer with more information will be included in future bulletins.

BIRTHDAYS

December

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 4th | Jamie Eisinger |
| 9th | Ashlee Eisinger |
| 21st | Fred Watson |

January

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 13th | Pr. Tony Rhodes |
| 17th | Lowell Battcher |
| 21st | Anna Watson |
| 30th | Rebecca Berry |

CHURCH CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD:

After worship service, grab a cookie & coffee, help decorate the tree with gold & white Chrismons, listen to carols or sing along, enjoy fellowship.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT ST. PHILIP'S:

Thank you to all who gave input regarding Christmas Eve services. It helped the Worship Committee plan what hopefully will enable all to celebrate this day meaningfully. Since Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year, it was decided to keep an afternoon service and an evening service, while cancelling the regular Sunday morning worship service on Christmas Eve. Both services will be the same, ending with the candlelight singing of Silent Night. Service times will be 3 PM & 7 PM.

Pastor Tony will provide information about other places of worship, and times, for those wishing to attend a morning service on that 4th Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve, and/or a traditional midnight service at 11 PM on Christmas Eve.

Next meeting for the Worship Committee is set for Monday, January 15, 2024 at 10 AM. All are welcome to attend or give input to members:

Barb Battcher, Carolyn Berry, Mary Kramer, Mary Murray, Justice Post, Pastor Tony Rhodes

On October 28th St Philip's and St Timothy congregations celebrated Reformation Sunday together. There were 59 people in attendance with a shared choir and an Octoberfest style lunch following. We shared BBQ sausages with a variety of delicious side dishes and lots of good conversations.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING-

Psalm 150 is hoping to put together a time to do Christmas Carol singing at the homes of members not able to be with us on Sunday mornings. We were thinking it could happen during the day or evening, whatever most people would prefer. There are also a number of people interested in singing along with Psalm 150. Please give your input to a Psalm 150 member. (Yes, you would like carol singers to come to your home and/or you would like to sing with us)



Busy Hands are Happy Hands

Perhaps you've heard the phrase, "Busy hands are happy hands." The full phrase first penned by Maryrose Wood reads, "Busy hands and idle minds have knitted many a sweater. Busy minds and idle hands have knitted many a brow."

Our Autumn Workday, held on the morning of Saturday, November 4th, was a huge success. Our hands, all 30 of them, were busy and our minds were far from idle. And as far as I know, no one was knitting anything. I'd like to thank the following participants for giving up their Saturday mornings to help spruce up our property:

Jim and Katie Anderson, Lowell and Barbara Battcher, the Berry's, Alan and Lesley Pedersen, Anke Richter, Mary Murray, Saji George, Mike Rupp, Anton Prange, and Sharon Anderson.

I learned that Katie Anderson is a very organized task master. I was impressed by the list of various gardening projects to be tackled that she had posted on a white board in the Narthex. In addition to gardening, several volunteers scrubbed the plastic folding chairs and cleaned out and organized the kitchen cabinets.

I've always enjoyed the following proverb. "A man who works with his hands is a laborer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands in his brain and his heart is an artist." The effort exhibited by our work crew was nothing short of artistry. I found it rewarding to give back to the place that has given me so much.

"God has given us two hands, one to receive with and the other to give with."

~ Billy Graham

Michael Berry
Storyteller

SPGA 2023 GOLF TOURNAMENT WRAP-UP

The SPGA (St. Philip's Golf Association) hosted a total of 10 players in the 13th annual St. Philip's Invitational Golf Tournament held October 14th at the prestigious Monterey Pines golf links, our home course. Set amongst the backdrop of Monterey Bay and nestled next to the Monterey Peninsula Airport, our field of competitors enjoyed a gorgeous afternoon of brilliant sunshine and gentle offshore breezes.

The field of contestants consisted of one awesome foursome and a couple of odd threesomes. First off the tee and paving the way for the other competitors were the golf pro duo of Jim and Katie Anderson with a couple of SPGA rookies, Don and Susan Alexander. They were followed by a few duffers from St. Timothy's – Bob Johansson, Walter Smith and his cheerful son, Owen. The power threesome of Mike Berry, George Isaac and Anke Richter brought up the rear of our tournament roster. The tournament format consisted of a scramble competition which equalizes individual handicaps by playing of the best ball location struck by each team member.

Congratulations to the dynamic duos of team Anderson and Alexander for winning this year's annual tournament! They managed to outpace their rivals from St. Timothy's by only 3 strokes. As the SPGA President, I'm thankful for the spirit of sport exhibited by Bob, Walter and Owen and hope they will continue to challenge in future years. Although the competition was fierce the camaraderie amongst the athletes was unparalleled and our competitive spirit took second place to enjoying our friendships.

You may be wondering how the power threesome of Berry, George and Richter fared during the tournament. Well, we had a delightful afternoon. We enjoyed the opportunity of playing together outside the confines of our church property on a beautiful afternoon. Admittedly, the golf skills of our threesome is far from earning professional status. The pace of play throughout the course was slow on a Saturday afternoon. We exhausted ourselves after playing a 9-hole round that took a little more than 3 hours and decided a fresh beverage on the patio while soaking up the sun seemed much more appealing, and I think we all agreed that it was. And truthfully, your SPGA President was feeling a few aches and pains. As such, our scorecard reflects a big "DQ" – disqualified. Note: I'll be meeting with the SPGA Rules Committee to discuss the pos-

sibility of playing just a 9-hole tournament next year.

More importantly, our post-round gathering at the 19th hole, aka “The Anderson Estate,” for libations and sustenance was off the charts; a perfect ending to a glorious day. The congregational dinner was well attended by a cross-sectional sampling of St. Philip’s golfers and non-golfers and proved to be an ideal setting for the end of a perfect day. Jim and Katie, we can’t thank you enough for your generous hospitality.

Mike Berry

SPGA President



The Christmas season is filled with so many activities. Beyond time with family and friends and time in worship, there are many community events in which you might like to participate. Below are two of them. Join with some St. Philip’s friends to enjoy together.

Streets of Bethlehem - A free community outdoor Christmas experience!

Come to Bethlehem to witness what it might have been like on the night of Jesus’ birth. Walk through the busy marketplace and watch out for the Roman Soldiers. See Mary and Joseph as they search for a place to stay. Peek into the manger to see God’s gift to us- His Son.

December 7-10, 2023 from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM. For more information see the website

www.streetsofbethlehem.com

Christmas in the Adobes – Monterey State Historic Park Association and California State Parks present the 39th Annual Christmas in the Adobes. This early evening walking tour of Monterey’s historic adobes adorned in holiday décor surprises and delights visitors with welcoming, candle-lit luminarias leading the way to each building’s entrance. Enjoy festive music and a variety of entertainment, as you explore over a dozen magical, historic adobes on the tour. Hear the stories of Monterey’s earliest buildings and savor the warm spirit of the community of this annual event that has become a family favorite during the holidays.

December 8 and 9 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Tickets are required and are available at

www.mdhpa.org.

December 2023

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | | | 1 8:30 am Food Bank | 2 |
| 3 10 am Worship 11 am Tree Decorating | 4 6:30 pm CVLUC | 5 | 6 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/Social Hour | 11 | 12 4 pm Men's Dinner | 13 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 14 | 15 8:30 am Food Bank | 16 3 pm Christmas Gala |
| 17 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/Social Hour | 18 | 19 | 20 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 <i>Christmas Eve Worship 3 & 7</i> | 25 <i>Christmas Day</i> | 26 | 27 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/Social Hour | | | | | | |

January 2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 4 | 5 8:30 am Food Bank | 6 |
| 7 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/ Social Hour | 8 | 9 4 pm Men's Dinner | 10 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/ Social Hour | 15 | 16 | 17 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 18 | 19 8:30 am Food Bank | 20 |
| 21 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/ Social Hour | 22 | 23 | 24 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 10 am Worship 11 am Coffee/ Social Hour | 29 | 30 I-help Shelter Only | 31 2 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm AA | | | |