



St. Philip Invitation

LIVE LIKE THAT: LOVE, FEED, SERVE.



CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT ST. PHILIP

At its heart, Christmas is a celebration of the wondrous power of God's love breaking into the world through the birth of a savior. Christmas is a celebration of hope and of joy! It's a celebration we await with hopeful expectation every year, but perhaps with even more longing this year. We worship the God who is incarnate in Jesus! The Word made flesh, who is grace upon grace.

Worship Opportunities this Season

4th Sunday in Advent: Holly Jolly Jelly Jam - Sunday, December 21 at 9:30am

We begin this Sunday worship in the sanctuary celebrating the final Sunday of Advent. Worship in the sanctuary will purposefully be brief so those present in person might move to the fellowship hall for food, music, and fun. There is no better combination than great breakfast food and the chorus of voices and instruments making music with Christmas songs of hope. At the Holly Jolly Jelly Jam don't miss this fantastic pairing of food and song in the fellowship hall. Please bring a favorite jelly, jam or spread to share. You are also invited to join in on the fun from home as we livestream this experience on Facebook - make yourself some breakfast, worship, and sing along.

Longest Night Worship ONLINE - Sunday, December 21, 7:00pm

This collaborative worship experience will premier via Facebook **ONLINE ONLY** on the longest night of the year, December 21. The worship experience will engage worshippers from different places in the Roanoke Valley and is intended to be a space for holding holiday grief during this merry season. St. Philip will worship the God who not only accompanies us when we celebrate but also when we are hurting.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship - Wednesday, December 24, 9pm

This service will be both in the sanctuary and live-streamed via Facebook. This Christmas worship includes many traditional favorites as we sing Christmas carols, celebrate holy communion, enjoy special music, and depart singing Silent Night with candles lit.

Lessons and Carols - Sunday, December 28, 9:30am

This service will be both in the sanctuary and live-streamed via Facebook. The congregation will celebrate the First Sunday of Christmas with a service of Lessons and Carols. There is no better way to make the story of Christmas an ongoing part of your story. God promises grace upon grace; made most evident by the presence of Jesus in a manger but also through the Holy Spirit here among us. Come let us worship and adore!



FEAST AT PHILIP'S: THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who made this year's Feast at Philips another wonderful event of sharing food and fellowship with our neighbors! It was fantastic having people back in the St. Philip fellowship hall. We are so grateful for all of the cooking, volunteering, prayers, and donations that make this expansive event possible every year.

COUNCIL NEWS

Council met on Tuesday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m. in person and via Zoom.

- Ministry Associate for Worship and Engagement Donita Moore reported out from the post-worship meeting she hosted on Nov. 9. There was a good turnout with a lot of interest in both traditional and contemporary music.
- Treasurer Max Holland reported that October was a good month for offerings and investment income, but that good news was offset by unusual expenses for tree removal and HVAC repair. Solar panels continue to lower utility costs and bring in small but welcome revenue from selling renewable energy tax credits.
- Pastor David reported on his pastoral activities, including officiating at memorial services, holding the Blessing of Animals, helping out with the blood drive, and continued onboarding of the new office administrator and finalizing the hiring of the new Ministry Associate for Worship and Engagement.
- Council approved a 2026 spending plan to present for discussion and a congregational vote at a Dec. 14 meeting.
- Council approved a 3% year-end bonus for Pastor David.

ST PHILIP ENDOWMENT GRANTS FOR MINISTRY

We are blessed. The St. Philip Endowment Fund is an incredible resource for ministry. During the past decade disbursements from this fund have made possible so much ranging from benevolent contributions to partners locally, nationally, and globally, to seed money for new ministries like our digital worship, to capital improvements, and much more.

The St. Philip Endowment Team now through the end of the year is receiving Endowment Grant Applications to consider for disbursements in the year 2026. The Endowment Team is asking that everyone, both ministries originating among the St. Philip community and ministries from our neighbors, to complete an application. Find the application here <https://stphiliplutheran.breezechms.com/form/fa8edb> or upon request from the church office. We are blessed.

From the Corner....

See, I am doing a new thing!

Isaiah 43:19

In Isaiah, God was assuring the Israelites that, despite their hardships, he would care for them and bring them into a new life. He was doing a new thing.

As Mary and Joseph waited and prepared for the birth of Jesus, they must have felt excitement and also fear, as expectant parents do. God assured them that he would be with them and help them. He was doing a new thing.

In this Advent season, we may feel joyful and also overwhelmed as we participate in the many activities, events, and ministries that celebrate and reflect our faith. The time of Advent and Christmas can seem like a whirlwind and sometimes we feel exhausted and long for rest. Yet, in our busyness, God is there, reminding us that he is always with us and he is always doing a new thing in us.

Will you embrace the new things God is doing in your life today?

-Ministry Associate for Worship and Engagement,
Donita Moore

DONATE BLOOD



Upcoming Blood Drive

St. Philip is hosting a blood drive for the Red Cross. Help change a life. Give blood on **Monday, December 15, 2025 12 - 6 p.m** in the Fellowship Hall. Please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: St Philip or search 24019 to schedule an appointment. Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment. Contact Debbie Kanode with any questions.

Help St. Philip Love, Feed and Serve



Help St. Philip Love, Feed, and Serve right now. As the year 2025 draws to a close, thank you for your generosity that has fueled God's mission happening through us. You are invited to continue your faithful generosity and even invited to make an additional offering as the calendar changes to a new year. For some retired folks IRA's require an annual minimum distribution and making that distribution a charitable gift can have an impact on one's taxes (please do consult a financial advisor for proper financial tax advice).

Help St. Philip Love, Feed, and Serve into the future. The church in general and St. Philip particularly wants to be a community that lives God's grace now and for many years to come. You are also invited to consider leaving a legacy of Loving, Feeding, and Serving years from now. You are invited to consider ensuring ongoing ministry at St. Philip by remembering St. Philip in your estate planning.

With a gift in your will, you can:

- Designate a specific dollar amount or overall percentage of your will or living trust to support the St. Philip, the Virginia Synod, the ELCA, or the ministries or organizations you specify.
- Create a legacy, supporting your favorite ministries long after you're gone.
- Make a significant gift without affecting your current lifestyle.
- Gift a gift that is generally not subject to state inheritance or estate taxes.
- Keep control of your assets during your lifetime; and rest assured that you can modify your bequest if your circumstances change.

In as little as one sentence, you can complete your gift. This type of donation in your will or living trust helps ensure that we continue our mission for years to come (AGAIN please consult a financial advisor or an estate attorney for proper and specific advice).

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Mark your calendars for the congregational meeting on **Sunday, December 14 at 10:30am**, held simultaneously in the sanctuary as well as via Zoom video conference. To access the meeting, go to www.zoom.com and enter meeting i.d. 860 4019 9836. The passcode is 24019.

There will be an update as to the ministry we share in and through St. Philip. Additionally, we will be voting on the annual spending plan. It is important for all of us to be a part of our church's mission and the resources needed to make it happen. Please make plans to be present, either in person or virtually. Please check your email inbox or your USPS mailbox for important information prior to the meeting.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86040199836?pwd=ZVpoN2NyeFFWTDR2WmNWeWR2SVJjdz09>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Melendy	December 1
Caroline Wilson	December 5
Genie Brown	December 7
Robin Burke	December 15
Paul Henkel	December 17
Rhonda Wilhelm	December 17
Barbara Hughes	December 19
Christopher Staley	December 26

What To Give the One Who Already Has Everything



Gift giving is such a joy! Except when it isn't. If there is someone you know who truly doesn't want a gift for Christmas yet you very much would like to give something, consider giving a gift in someone's honor.

Check out the [ELCA Good Gifts Catalog](https://goodgifts.elca.org/) (<https://goodgifts.elca.org/>) and make a difference for someone who very much could use a little help. Every project in every community in the catalog starts with listening very intentionall. The ELCA Good Gifts Catalog provides opportunities for gifts where they are needed most as identified by people in those communities.

8115 WILLIAMSON ROAD
ROANOKE, VA 24019

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

DAVID C. DERRICK, PASTOR (PASTORDAVID@STPHILIPLUTHERAN.NET)
RAE BARKER, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR (OFFICEADMIN@STPHILIPLUTHERAN.NET)
DONITA MOORE, MINISTRY ASSOCIATE FOR WORSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT (WORSHIP@STPHILIPLUTHERAN.NET)

CHURCH COUNCIL

ELLEN MEHALIC, COUNCIL PRESIDENT; DAN RADMACHER, COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT;
MAX HOLLAND TREASURER; DAVE MELLON, FINANCIAL SECRETARY; KAREN LOWDON, COUNCIL SECRETARY;
MEMBERS: MARY JO SAHM, LIZ LEONARD, BRENT FERGUSON,
MARIBETH SCHERMER, DEDI SPRADLIN, PAUL ECONOMY

ST. PHILIP LUTHERAN CHURCH IS A CONGREGATION OF THE VIRGINIA SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.
THE REVEREND PHYLLIS MILTON, BISHOP, VIRGINIA SYNOD





It's the Thought that Counts by Rob Blezard

Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you." - Luke 6:38

Why is it so hard to find that all-too-elusive "perfect gift" for the loved ones in your life? For many of us, it's because they already have everything they need and most of what they want.

It sometimes feels impossible to find a gift that won't be banished to that closet for unwanted, unneeded, and unused presents -- alongside the loud ties, the strong perfumes, the unread books, and the garish sweaters. When it comes to gift-giving, it's often said, "It's the thought that counts." If that's true, why do we still put so much emphasis on the gift?

This year focus on the thoughts behind your Christmas gifts. Thoughts in keeping with the season. Thoughts of meeting real needs and giving where it will be much appreciated.

With so many disadvantaged people in the world, at least some of our Christmas budget would be well spent helping our needy neighbors.

If you are buying for a loved one who has everything, consider instead giving a monetary donation in their honor to a worthy charity that helps the poor. Some charities, such as Heifer International and ELCA Good Gifts, let you buy a specific item -- such as a goat or pig for a family, or a water well for a village -- to help people in the developing world.

Make the gift in your loved one's name or honor, and then describe it in a card attached to a low-cost "token" gift, such as a small box of chocolates or a bottle of wine. The better part of your gift will go to someone who truly needs it, and your loved one will share the joy of loving and helping your neighbors in need.

Just remember, 'It's the thought that counts!'

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Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, Maryland, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.



Season of Advent at St. Philip

We are people of faith who live in a complex world. We hear about tragedy after tragedy in the news. Our own lives can be filled at times with elements of grief, overwhelmedness, or doubt. All of this might lead us to feeling just a bit hopeless. And yet, we are called as people of faith, even in the midst of the complexities of our lives and this world, to hope! Our worship theme for this Advent season will include words intending to restore hope, words that will remind us Jesus comes to us in the middle of the complexities. We'll hear powerful stories from scripture, sing songs of hope, and celebrate the truths of God's love and grace. All as we anticipate the coming of Christ, and the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brings - in a manger and in our lives. Join us for worship, online or in person, this Advent season as we ponder rejoicing in a weary world.



Holly Jolly Jelly Jam - Sunday, December 21 at 9:30am

St. Philip is providing the bread, you provide the spread-- jams, jellies, any spread of your liking to share! We begin this Sunday worship in the sanctuary celebrating the final Sunday of Advent. Worship in the sanctuary will purposefully be brief so those present in person might move to the fellowship hall for food, music, and fun. There is no better combination than great breakfast food and the chorus of voices and instruments making music with Christmas songs of hope. At the Holly Jolly Jelly Jam don't miss this fantastic pairing of food and song in the fellowship hall. Please bring a favorite jelly, jam, or spread to share. You are also invited to join in on the fun from home as we livestream this experience on Facebook - make yourself some breakfast, worship, and sing along.



Sharing the Faith

We all know evangelism, sharing the good news of God's love through Jesus, is important, but sometimes we're a little unsure of how to go about it. Do we invite our neighbor to come be a part of Feast at Philips? Encourage our co-worker to visit your church? Tell the cashier at the grocery store that God's grace is for them, too? All good ways! There are even more ways to share the Good News of God's love and grace.

One of those exciting ways is through social media. We all know social media can be a divisive place, but the reality is that many of us spend some amount of time on it. It's a great platform for us to share about God's love and the ministry happening in and through St. Philip. The church streams Sunday service every week on Facebook. Encouraging messages and signs of the ways we love, feed, and serve are posted throughout the week.

Here's where your part comes in! Check out the St. Philip Facebook page. Make sure you've "liked" the page. When you see a St. Philip post or video come across your feed, take a second to watch it and then like it, comment on it, or even share it on your own page or the page of a friend. Sharing that grace-filled message with someone else is a powerful act of evangelism.

So if you're on Facebook, check out the St. Philip page! Be sure to keep paying attention to it and spreading the Good News through liking and sharing. We all have the amazing opportunity to be Digital Evangelists - spreading the love and grace of God everywhere!

The Growing Community at St. Philip

As a community of faith active in ministry, we expect to worship with zeal, serve the world with gladness, proclaim the good news of Christ Jesus, and grow in faith. We also expect for our community to grow. Knowing that God is moving in and through St. Philip we excitedly look forward to Sunday January 11th, as we officially receive new members to this congregation.

You are a part of a growing community. Share your faith with someone you know. Tell someone about the ministry that you are passionate about. Invite someone to worship. God's Spirit is moving through you.

If you are interested in joining the congregation at St. Philip please speak with Pastor David.

