St. Philip Invitation

LIVE LIKE THAT: LOVE, FEED, SERVE.

JANUARY 2026

Building a Culture of Generosity: Returning Thanksgiving

Each year, as winter settles in and the familiar glow of Christmas lights fades, many of us find ourselves standing in the long, winding line of the "returns" counter. We carry gifts that didn't fit, colors that weren't quite right, gadgets we didn't really need. There, under the soft hum of fluorescent lights, we hand back what was given—offering it up so it can find its proper place.

I often think: returning is its own kind of gratitude. It is an acknowledgment that the giver meant well, even if the gift wasn't ours to keep.

In the life of faith, we practice another kind of returning. We return Thanksgiving to God—not the holiday, but the posture.

In Lutheran theology, we speak of *simul justus et peccator*, of being saints and sinners at once, held wholly by grace. This means our thanksgiving is never perfect, yet God delights in it all the same. Our generosity is not a payment owed but a response to mercy already given. Like handing back a gift so it may find its true purpose, we return our praise, our resources, our very selves to the One who first placed them in our hands.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FAY WHITT	JAN 1
JERRY FALK	JAN 2
ROB WRIGHT	JAN 6
RICHARD FINGER	JAN 8
ROBBIE FIELDER	JAN 10
GLENN KANODE	JAN 16
ZIPPIE SMITH	JAN 16
RAE BARKER	JAN 17
BRENT FERGUSON	JAN 19
ROSIE FALK	JAN 21
ROD DILLMAN	JAN 22

FROM THE CORNER...

Let There Be Joy!

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:10

On January 6, the day of Epiphany, we celebrate the coming of the Magi, following the light of a star to worship Jesus. During the season of Epiphany, January 6 to Ash Wednesday, our liturgy encourages us to remember the light of Jesus that came into the world silently from a stable corner, grew and learned and emerged into the world from that corner to fill the world and shake it up with radical love, disappeared into darkness, and then burst forth from the corners of a cross and a grave to promise the world eternal light and life.

Jesus brought light and change and joy and then gave us the commission to continue his legacy by following his example and also bringing light and change and joy to the world.

Through him, and with him, and in him, we are the light bearers, the change makers, and the joy bringers.

Let there be light!

Let there be change!

Let there be joy!

-Donita Moore, Ministry Associate for Worship and Engagement

COUNCIL NEWS FROM COUNCIL SECRETARY KAREN LOWDON

Church Council adopted reports from December.

From Pastor David---Worship planning continued weekly and included a Prayer Shawl Blessing and helping reorganize Altar Guild.

Assisted with the 2026 Spending Plan and meets weekly with the office administrator.

He is helping create a new partnership to support and enhance worship.

Pastoral Care continues regularly and is time intensive. Hospital and homebound visits, home and in-person visits, phone calls and messages, hand-written notes and emails are all involved.

Property

Five trees have been removed from the property. HVAC system was updated to fix heating in some areas.

Feast at Philips

There was a great turnout for this event with wide participation both at St. Philip and with the delivery of to go meals.

Communications and Digital Outreach

Pastor Colleen Hetrick, assistant to the bishop for the Virginia Synod consulted with St. Philip staff to develop a digital and social media strategy. She commended St. Philip for the extensive ways this is already happening and identified St. Philip as a model for other churches in using all available mediums for ministry.

Treasurer's Report from Max Holland

2025 FINANCIAL UPDATE THROUGH NOVEMBER

Projected YTD Budget $235,819.

Receipts Year to Date $230,724.

Expenses Year to Date $257,918.

CAFE NEWS

Beginning January 4th, Cafe will be available every Sunday after the service. If you have a special treat or snack you would like to occasionally share during Cafe it will be welcomed and enjoyed. We are also looking for individuals or couples to assist with making coffee and lemonade and setting up. Please see Nancy or Charlie Shadix or Linda Duncan Rhodes or look for the sign-up sheet in the narthex. We look forward to joining all for fellowship and conversation.

SAFE AND SOUND

One of the best gifts for ministry at St. Philip is the amazing facility we enjoy for worship, as a ministry launching site, and as a resource for the community. And we certainly expect all of those things to continue!

After an extended time of inconsistently having the building alarm armed while our facility is empty, we are making a concerted effort to care for our facility by more consistently securing the building when it is unoccupied. Starting January 1, please be aware that outside of office hours you will need to enter the building through the side entrance (under the overhang). Count on the alarm system being set. Please check with the church office, Pastor David, or Dedi Spradlin for the code to disarm.

Winter Weather Policy

It's that time of year again. When roads are too dangerous to travel, announcements about worship services will be made using our telephone messaging service and posted on Facebook. As always, use your good judgment because your safety is important to us.

Blood Drive

Thank you to all of the volunteers and donors that made the December Blood Drive such a success! It was a completely full drive and those donations will go on to save many lives! Thank you, thank you!

Quilts of Valor Presentation

Please join us on January 31st at 2:00 pm as Bryan Jenkins, Charlie Shadix and Chuck Spradlin are presented with a Quilt of Valor. All family and friends are welcome to attend. Following the presentation you are invited to bring a pot of your favorite soup and bread and join us in a meal and fellowship.

The Quilt of Valor Foundation is a national organization begun in 2003 by Blue Star mom Catherine Roberts. Her son was serving in Iraq and she was very anxious about him. One night she dreamed of a post-deployment warrior struggling with his war demons. She then saw him sitting on the side of his bed and wrapped in a quilt. His demeanor changed from despair to hope and well-being. Because of the quilt. The quilt provided comfort and healing. It was from this vision that the Quilt of Valor (QOV) Foundation began . The first QOV was awarded to a young soldier in Walter Reed Hospital who lost his leg in Iraq.

QOV Foundation is a grassroots group of quilters from all across the United States. We are a team of volunteers who donate time, sewing skills and materials to make quilts to honor our nation's veterans and active service members. We are funded by donations, both monetary and in the form of fabric and supplies. Every penny and scrap of fabric is used to honor our local heroes. To date we have awarded over 427,000 quilts

Because of Catherine Roberts' dream, we don't just hand out our quilt to those being honored. We wrap each honoree in his or her quilt as a symbol of the warmth and healing, the gratitude and love we sew into every quilt we make.

The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover Service Members and Veterans touched by war with a comforting and healing Quilt of Valor. The ceremony is very special and important. We thank them for their service, remind ourselves that freedom is not free and remind them that they are forever in our thoughts and hearts.

Thank You

YOUR ST. PHILIP STAFF IS GRATEFUL

Thank you, thank you! Your St. Philip staff is so grateful for the Christmas gift and the deep generosity of this congregation. The privilege of serving alongside all of you to proclaim the love of Christ in the world is truly the gift that keeps on giving. Thank you for your generosity and thank you for all the ways that we partner in mission throughout the year.

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. 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 during worship at 9:30am.

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. Share on social media your faith and your faith community. God's Spirit is moving through you.

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

BUILDING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY: RETURNING THANKSGIVING

Continued from page 1...

A culture of generosity begins in that place of return. It is shaped not by obligation but by the deep knowing that all we have is gift—breath and bread, time and treasure, forgiveness poured over us like water at the font. Generosity is simply grace echoing outward.

So perhaps this season, as some stand at store counters and others gather at tables, the church stands before God with open hands. We return thanks. We return ourselves. And in doing so, we find that God, in abundant mercy, gives again—filling our emptiness with purpose, our worries with peace, and our small offerings with surprising joy.

Peace and grace,

Rae Barker
Office Administrator

BUILDING ON A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY
ST. PHILIP LUTHERAN CHURCH

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ROANOKE, VA 24019

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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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

St. Philip Lutheran Church
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