

LIFE @ ST. PHILIP'S



St. Philip's Lutheran Church | Toronto, ON

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DATES OF NOTE:

- February 3** – Community
Conversations
- February 14** – Service of
Ashes
- February 21, 28** – Soup
Supper with Holden Evening
Prayer
- February 22** – 50+ Luncheon
- February 24** – Messy Church
- February 25** – AGM
- **March 1** – World Day of
Prayer**

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday: 9 - 12

HOLIDAY:

Church office will be closed
February 19 for Family Day



From Pastor Tuula

I started my ministry as a hospital chaplain and I've watched a lot of people die. If this subject makes you uncomfortable, you are not alone. It makes me uncomfortable, too. And there's a part of me that thinks that talking about death, something so obviously depressing, is the wrong move for a pastor. Ministers are often told that we should preach about happy things, and that if we don't, people will stop coming to our churches.

Maybe that's true. Most of the time I do try to preach sermons that focus on the good and hopeful parts of life. But if that's all I do, I'm doing a disservice - because my job as a minister of the gospel, is to tell the truth. And there is one big, uncomfortable truth we cannot avoid: sooner or later, no matter how we try to stop it or delay it, we are all going to die.

There's another uncomfortable truth as well. The old line about death and taxes really should say that there are two things you can be sure of in life: death, and the fact that while you live you are going to mess up. We are mortal, and we are fallible. These are the certainties of being a human being.

Lent speaks to both. On Ash Wednesday we receive ashes on our foreheads and hear the words, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." It's also a day when we repent of all the things that we aren't doing right. We confess our sins, and we say that over the course of the next 40 days we are going to try to do better. We are going to turn ourselves around, to set a new course.

We are mortal, and we are fallible—but we are not hopeless. We are not doomed. We are, in fact, claimed by something much larger than ourselves. Those ashes are a sign that we are claimed by God,

(...continued on next page)

and if God lays claim to us, then nothing, not even our own mistakes or the end of our own life, will ever be enough to destroy us.

After we receive our ashes, we are invited to be participants in the holy season of Lent. We are invited into a journey of new life. The closeness with God that this season can bring doesn't necessarily come from giving something up, or even taking something on. It comes from this: the willingness to be marked as Christ's own and to find your hope in his story. The ashes are just a visible sign that you are ready to start a journey that can change everything. They are a sign of hope on our foreheads, a symbol of where we will put our hope during these 40 days.

Please join us on **Ash Wednesday, February 14 @ 7:00 pm** for Service of Ashes.

See you in church!
Pastor Tuula

Christmas at 44 Willowridge



A first-time program was the 'Gifts and Gingerbread Cookies' at Willowridge. Thank you for your angel fund support. We were delighted to partner with St. Timothy's Presbyterian in hosting this program. Sixty-five families picked up a wrapped fresh produce basket along with a \$25 grocery gift card. Children decorated gingerbread cookies. Tim Hortons supplied donuts and hot chocolate and gift cards. We held several draws for \$50 grocery gift cards.

Wool hats knitted by St. Philip's members were displayed and happily selected. A large volunteer team was involved in getting the baskets ready and in hosting the actual event. The Willowridge community room was a place of love for that afternoon.

The impact of the work was captured by a tenant representative in this note of gratitude...

"We want to extend our sincere thanks to you and your team at Good Food Market for your invaluable support to the 44 Willowridge community for 2023. Your contributions and commitment played a pivotal role in creating a better environment and improving tenant engagement opportunities for our community. We do look forward to working together on services and programs for the upcoming year 2024 as we are eager to explore new initiatives."

Eunice Hogeveen

Council Update

For the past several months, we have been blessed with a stream of new members. Participation in services, both in-person and online, are seeing an uptick. Through our communal activities we overcame the financial deficit which caused so much angst in November. These are fine accomplishments that we should be proud of. These illustrate a solidarity in purpose.



However, we need remember that many of the new members have arrived from St. Ansgar, Toronto and Grace, Oakville, ELCIC churches which closed. Declining membership and participation affect congregations' ability to maintain and support infrastructure and staff. The experiences here in Toronto are not unique and reflect a national and international trend. St. Philip's is not immune from these.

For the past several months, the Council has been consulting with specialists in Synod and other church-based organizations in an effort to plot a path forward that would maximize the use of our building and property, extend our outreach into the community, and provide additional finances.

We are currently exploring the possibility of renting our under-used basement to a day-care facility. There are a number of financial, space and diligence issues to be negotiated and resolved, and both the council and the congregation must approve any agreement. This is a short-term initiative. More details to come.

While these are challenging times, they can also be exciting times. On a related note, there are three vacancies on council that need to be filled. Would you like to join? Please contact Pastor Tuula.

Sam Marcuson

Finance Update

Late last year I reported that St Philip's was in a financial deficit position of more than \$20,000. With that news, the congregation rallied and held several fundraising events in December including the auction which raised over \$6,000. This combined with individual donations allowed us to substantially reduce our deficit.

While the books have not been closed as of yet I am forecasting a near balanced budget which by all accounts is quite remarkable. More information will be made available at our upcoming **Annual General Meeting** scheduled for **February 25**.

Please note that tax receipts for 2023 will be emailed to you no later than mid-February. Please look for it in your email. For other donors, please look to your mailbox at home for the post.

Thank you for your continued contribution to St. Philip's.

Gary Wushnakowski



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25
following worship

You are encouraged to attend and have your voice heard as well as hear about the successful initiatives taken on in the past year.

Music Notes

St. Philip's had a very busy Christmas season. We were graced with the presence of many extra choir members for the services close to Christmas; to a maximum of 18, which provided wonderful results musically. And all of these "Christmas singers" are welcome to return at any time, especially if there is an anthem which they particularly love. I will keep you apprised of what we plan to sing and make recordings and music available for anyone who wishes to receive them.



There was a very beautiful joint carol service held at St. Matthew's Anglican Church on **December 3** in which Pastor Tuula, plus several choir and bell members and I participated. We held a reflective solstice service on **December 21** where we were joined by Hyung Sun Paik, a violinist of many years standing with the Toronto Symphony. Katie Clark, trumpeter, played beautifully on Christmas Eve.

I want to express my appreciation to all our singers, who gamely learned some new music which I brought, and loyally attended choir practices. The choir are the backbone of music in our services; and please do tell them regularly how delightful they are to hear and how greatly they are appreciated!

We are currently rehearsing and planning to sing the famous Josh Groban song "You raise me up" and spirituals "Precious Lord", and "Hymn to Freedom" by Oscar Peterson among other well-known music.

All best wishes for a healthy and happy winter. I am very much enjoying getting to know you.

Karen Quinton

SPLC Book Club



We met for the first time on **January 10**. Nine people were in attendance.

We decided to meet monthly on the second Wednesday of the month @ 1:00 pm. Our first book to be discussed on **February 14** will be Peace by Chocolate by Jon Tattrie.

New members welcome at any time. Please contact the church office for details.

Personal Visit

Pastor Tuula met with Julie Potocny before the holidays.



Christmas Pageant and December Worship



Messy Church



The Messy Church program is back in 2024! We gather once a month and learn about a Bible story, participate in activities, share a family-friendly meal together, and end with a worship celebration. The program is very casual, fun, and accessible to anyone, anywhere on their faith journey. We just had our January session, where we learned about the story of Noah's Ark, and how God keeps his promises. The creative activities included making rain sticks, a "sink or float" experiment, and a "spot it on the ark" game. We even built an ark that was big enough to walk into and filled with some favourite stuffed animals.



We're looking forward to seeing you this winter and spring at Messy Church! Please add these dates in your calendar for upcoming events: **February 24**, **March 29** (a special Good Friday event), **April 27**, and **May 25**. Messy Church is intended for all ages, and all are welcome. If you're interested in getting involved, please reach out to stphilipsmessychurch@gmail.com.

Dawn Pascoe

50 + Events

On **Thursday, December 14** we enjoyed a festive chicken special with over 40 people in attendance.

After lunch New Horizons Band played favourite Christmas carols in the Sanctuary. All had a festive time!



On **Thursday, January 18** the group met for a light lunch followed by a chair yoga session with our very own Dave Piller.



Please see page 7 for details on our next event.

Zumba: Mondays @ 1:00 pm

Joyful Noise Bell Choir: Mondays @ 7:15 pm

Girl Guides: Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm

Bible Study: Tuesday, Feb. 6 @ 7:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87378764191?pwd=ckl4R2k3M0tkdUhXK1ZnSWJZNHJ0dz09>

Meeting ID: 873 7876 4191; Passcode: 604550

Cover Girls: Wednesdays @ 10:00 am

Choir Practice: Wednesdays @ 7:30 pm

Service of Ashes: Feb. 14 @ 7:00 pm

Soup Suppers @ 6:00 pm and Holden Evening Prayer Service @ 7:00 pm: Wednesdays: Feb. 21, 28, March 6, 13, 20

Messy Church: Saturday, Feb. 24 @ 4:00 pm

AGM: Sunday, Feb. 25 @ 11:15 am

Readings for February

5th Sunday after Epiphany – February 4

Isaiah 40: 21 -31/Psalm 147:1-11,20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23/Mark 1:29-39

Transfiguration Sunday – February 11

2 Kings 2:1-12/Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6/Mark 9:2-9

Ash Wednesday – February 14

Joel 2:1-2,12-17/Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17/2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10
Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

Lent I – February 18

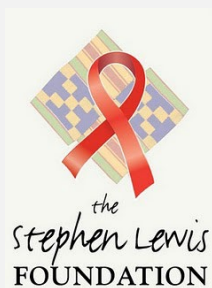
Genesis 9:8-17/Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22/Mark 1:9-15

Lent II – February 25

Genesis 17:1-7,15-16/Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25/Mark 8:31-38

50+

Luncheon with Speaker



“Grandmothers to Grandmothers” Campaign

Feb. 22 @ 12:15 pm

Lunch: Lasagna

Cost: Freewill offering

Register by **February 20**: By using the sign-up sheet in the narthex or call the church office at 416.622.5577.

Baptism

Elle Cate Partington was baptized on **Sunday, January 21**.

Elle is the daughter of Cathy Grant and Carl Partington and the granddaughter of Martha Schafrick.





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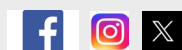
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'Friend' us on Facebook

Instagram: @stphilipslutheran

Twitter: @SPLCOnline



Lunch and Learn: Prayer



Please join us on **Sunday, March 3** after worship. The topic is prayer and will be led by Dr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas. She is the Reverend Mother at the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, Toronto. – a monastic community within the Anglican Church of Canada.

The community is a contemporary expression of the religious life for women and centered on prayer.

Next...

Please submit articles and high-res photos (minimum 2 MB) for the next issue of LIFE by **February 23** ... send good news to Margaret Isaacs: stphilip@bellnet.ca



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.