

The Philippian

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Philip's Lutheran Church of Hastings, Minnesota

Come and Worship...Come and Serve...Come and Learn...Come as you are
...*Philip said to him, "Come and see" John 1:46*



December 2024

Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent

5:15 pm Philadazzle

7:00 pm Chris Falteisek Concert

Sunday, December 8

10:40 am

Stewardship Pancake Breakfast

Family Sunday School

Sunday, December 15

9:30 am

Worship / Christmas Program

Saturday, December 21

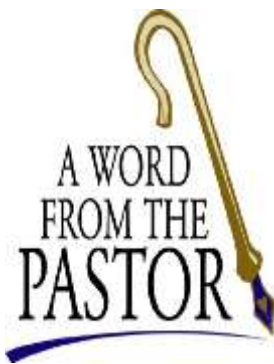
3:00 pm Blue Christmas Service

Tuesday, December 24

3:00 and 5:00 pm

Christmas Eve Worship Service

There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." *Luke 21:25-27*



Don't you think it is odd that we begin our church year with a Gospel lesson that focuses on the second coming of Christ? Should we not have had this lesson to close out the liturgical year? However, I recently read an article by Dr. Mark Powell that the place to begin our story of redemption is at the end. As Christians we

are not defined by what we were or what we did, but by what we will become through God's grace and Christ redemption.

We are first and foremost people of hope. Jesus says that when nations are in distress and people are fainting from fear and foreboding, we are to raise our heads. The central theme of our Gospel lesson for this Sunday in Advent (and virtually every other week) is "hope". We are able to hope because we are different than the rest of the world. We respond differently to distress because we know that GOD IS IN CHARGE! This is the good news that makes all the difference.

This is not to say that the powers of evil will not have a significant effect on our lives. Earlier in chapter 21, Jesus tells his disciples that they will be arrested and persecuted and handed over to the synagogues and prisons and brought before kings and governors. They will be betrayed by parents, relatives and friends. Some of them will be put to death and all of them will be hated because of Jesus' name. Jesus then says, "But not a hair of your head will perish."

Is Jesus saying that if you follow me you may die, but you'll have great hair? No. Jesus is promising to his disciples and to us that whatever effect evil has upon us, it will not be the last word. God is more powerful

than the powers of this world, and we are blessed to have faith to believe this.

The thing that sets Christians apart from the rest of the world is our hope. We don't hope in ourselves. We don't place our hope in the traditions of our past. We place our hope in our living Lord who became human, lived, died, was resurrected and who will come again. Living our lives with hope for a better future enables us to work at making a better present. A present that is filled with meaning and purpose and hope. Have a blessed Advent season and a Christmas that reveals the source of our greatest hopes fulfilled.

*Your Servant in Christ,
Pastor Geier*

Sunday Scripture Readings

December 1	Jeremiah 33:14-16 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Luke 21:25-36
December 8	Malachi 3:1-4 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6
December 15	Zephaniah 3:14-20 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18
December 22	Micah 5:2-5a Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-55
December 29	1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52

– Among Our Own –

Congratulations to...

Congratulations to our four Confirmands, Reed Anderson, Emery Hedeon, Megan Sieben and David Tireman, who were confirmed on October 27. We continue to be very grateful to have you and your families be a part of our St. Philip's church family.

Adeline Rose Garvey (daughter of Bryce and Megan Garvey) blessings on her baptism

Sympathies to...

Family and Friends of Elaine Wilbur as they mourn her death

Preschool Chatter

The month of November was full of exciting activities learning about night creatures, healthy eating, and Thanksgiving. This month's activities included learning about space, class favorite Pete the Cat stories, a classroom grocery store, fun turkey songs/activities, and an upcoming Thanksgiving feast on November 26 and 27. We talked a lot about what it means to be thankful and how God has provided us with all the wonderful things we have in our lives. As a staff we know one of our blessings is definitely being able to do what we do and witness life through the eyes of a child every day!

We were also able to hold conferences on the evenings of November 25 and 26. This is a wonderful time to share with families about their child's progress as well as their goals moving forward this school year.

The holidays are in the air and preschool is really starting to buzz. The children started working on their Christmas program songs in early November and can't wait to perform *Happy Birthday Baby Jesus* for their families and friends on December 19 at 6 pm.

As we move into the Christmas season we pray that each of you are able to enjoy the reason for the season with your families. May peace and comfort find those of you who need it most.

Christmas blessings to you all,
Becky Kaphing and Lorelei Rein
 Preschool Co-Directors

Giving and Expense

2024	2023
October 2024 YTD General & Misc Giving	
* \$649,011.65	\$416,337.44
October 2024 YTD Capital Fund	
\$139,949.00	\$124,616.50
October 2024 YTD Expenses	
\$539,337.64	\$467,130.14
Net	
\$249,623.01	\$73,823.80
October 2024 YTD Mortgage Principal Rqrd.	
\$79,586.43	\$74,980.92

* Includes "Complete the Dream" Giving and Expense

Stewardship Sunday - December 8

All St. Philip's households have now received the 2025 Stewardship Packet and a response post card for the December 8, complimentary Pancake/Sausage breakfast. If you plan to attend the breakfast, respond immediately by signing up on the kiosk or bringing your post card in and placing it in the basket on the welcome center. It will be an enjoyable morning.



On Sunday, December 8, households will bring their pledge card forward when receiving communion. If not present that day, please send it or bring it to the church so it is received by the end of December 2024.

Sending in your card is requested so it is known you have received the invitation to pledge. Financial personnel secure the details of all pledges.

The Stewardship Ministry Team conducts the campaign and encourages your participation. If no pledge is possible for you, please remit the card with that response.

The Stewardship Ministry Team thanks you for your response.

December Adult Forum

December 1: Join us for something topical based on The Wired Word. Details in the bulletin you will get by email on the Friday before.

December 8: Stewardship pancake breakfast. No Adult Forum; enjoy the food and fellowship!

December 15: For a variety of reasons, the Christmas season is not a happy one for everyone. Pastor Geier will lead a session on Biblical lament, focusing on Psalm 88.

December 21 at 3 pm: Blue Christmas service, led by Pastor Geier, for those who find themselves less than jolly on the shortest day of the year.

December 22: Christians are not the only ones who celebrate this time of the year. Come join us to learn about fall/winter holidays in other religious traditions

December 29: Adult Forum will take a holiday pause. See you in January!

Thank You!

Thank you to all who helped St. Philip's be present in the community for the Candy Crawl in Downtown Hastings on October 27. A huge crowd enjoyed a beautiful fall Sunday afternoon of activities and treats. We served almost forty-five gallons of cocoa, but ran out of cups (800) a half hour early.

Thank you to the eighteen families of the congregation for donations of over 1,300 candies, nine bags of marshmallows and eleven containers of cocoa mix.

Thank you also to sixteen members who helped organize, prepare and transport to and from church, serve, refill coolers, and clean up downtown and at church afterwards.

Thank you to The Busted Nut Bar and Grill for letting us refill hot water for our cocoa coolers. It's a great community event that we're proud to be part of for many years!

*Camille Nelson
Fellowship Ministry*

To My St. Philip's Family,

A heartfelt thank you for all of the cards, meals, thoughts and prayers during my recent diagnosis and surgery for kidney cancer. Your kindness is very much appreciated!

*Love and Blessings,
Heidi Nelson*

Thanks to all who donated toward the Ellen Diischer Memorial Quilt drawing. A total of \$350 was collected that will go toward SPLC Children's Education programming. Brody Hampl won the drawing for the quilt. Brody was an active participant in the children's musicals. He is currently a student at Northern State University majoring in music. Congratulations, Brody! You are an example of Ellen's blessings living on.

Special thanks to Richard and Grant Anderson, Katie and Andy Lindberg, Tony Nichols, Carlos and Micah Villavicencio who along with Nick Clark and Pastor Geier helped clean up two houses and NINE pickup loads of leaves and get them to the Hastings Yard Waste drop off. (We are especially grateful for Tony's backpack blower!) We were blessed with pleasant weather, great fellowship and treats! Your service makes a real difference to the St. Philip's community.

A big Thank You to Kelsey Wormley for organizing the musical group who led worship on November 10 and musicians who enhanced worship with their talents. Musicians included Kelsey and Emily Wormley, Dave Tank, Sam Willis, and guest musicians from Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Apple Valley: Jerry, Chris, and Kevin.

Thank you to Kim Hoffbeck for being the official photographer for the confirmation photos once again this year.

Christmas Worship Leaders

Will you be worshipping here at St. Philip's on Christmas Eve? The Worship and Music Committee is seeking volunteers for the 3:00 and 5:00 pm worship services that day. We are in need of greeters, ushers, lectors, and communion servers. Please sign up on the kiosk in the narthex or contact Lori Best @ 763-807-3667 or loribest1@gmail.com.

Philadazzle and "Christmas Around the World" Concert by Chris Falteisek

Sunday, December 1 Philadazzle roast pork dinner begins at 5:15 pm followed by "Christmas Around the World" concert by Chris Falteisek. Tickets for the dinner are on sale until November 24. The concert begins at 7 pm and the public is encouraged to attend. No admission cost, but a freewill offering will be collected from visitors.

Children's Choir Offers Up "Mighty" Melodies

Kelsey Wormley directs St. Philip's children's choir which is always a welcome addition to the worship services. They offer special music monthly. They have memorized selections which they sing out with expression and gusto!





Saturday, December 21 at 3:00 pm

Blue Christmas? Yes, blue as in the blues. As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with a vitriolic and divisive election, the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark over the future. There are any number of other experiences that make parties and joviality painful for many in our congregation and community.

Some are mourning the death of a loved one. Some suffer from illness, addiction, or estrangement. Some are lonely, struggling financially, or in conflict with another. Many are dealing with mental illness in one of its many hurtful manifestations. Some hurt because of the great pain, need, and violence in our nation and world. The reasons for coming are myriad.

We will gather to worship on December 21, (the longest night of the year,) though we will be worshipping at 3:00 pm since there was some feedback that many people don't like to drive in the dark. We will gather even in our hurt to remember God is good, we are not alone, and we have every reason to hold on to hope.

Advent is often called the season of waiting. What are we waiting for? Hope. The Messiah. A Savior. Celebrating Advent is the recognition that we need a savior. That although the world may be dark, difficult, and lonely, there is a promise coming. Recognizing our loss and making space for grieving doesn't minimize the promise. It accentuates it.

If this service sounds like something that speaks to your life and feelings, know that there is a place for you here. Join us as we come to worship with all our "stuff" on December 21.

Senior Gift Giving Program

It's that time of year where we get to bless and honor a Augustana Health Center resident or a homebound member of St. Philip's for Christmas. Our goal is to provide fifty-five residents (40 women and 15 men) with a pampering gift so that each resident knows that they are loved and thought of. With your help, it's possible!

You can purchase a gift for \$15 per senior. Each pampering gift includes a Mary Kay Hand Cream or Foot Cream, Christmas favor, and special warm wishes tucked inside, a gift card with your name on it! Or you can be anonymous. It also includes gift wrap and delivery!

To purchase a gift for a Senior, stop by the table in Narthex on Sunday, December 8 or Sunday, December 22. Please feel free to contact Kathy Willis, either by phone or text at 612-801-5660, or by email to kathryngw@msn.com if you don't get a chance to purchase a gift at church. Pay with cash, check or Venmo @Kathryn-Willis-5 and put "Senior gift" in comments.

Many of these residents have no family and no visitors. Oftentimes ours are the only gift they receive. Come be part of this great opportunity not only to give a gift of JOY to our friends at Augustana Care Center and a homebound church friend, but also \$1 from each gift will be given to support our St. Philip's Youth Programs. The final day to participate is Sunday, December 22. Gifts will be hand-delivered on Monday, December 23.

Prayer Shawls

Have you noticed our colorful prayer shawls displayed in the narthex in the last few months? They have been made for many years by loving hands and shared by members of the congregation for someone that could use a prayer and warm hug under a prayer shawl.

Are you someone who likes to knit or crochet on long winter nights? Would you like to help warm someone else's day by helping replenish our dwindling supply? Jennie Thomas on the Prayer Team has a pattern for you or you could use your own. LuAnn Roiger and Barb Jorenby also can help you with any questions.

Just drop shawls off at the office and we will be sure they find a grateful recipient. If you know of someone who could use a shawl, feel free to take it and share the care from St. Philip's Congregation!

Christmas Pageant

Our Christmas Pageant is December 15 this year during our regular 9:30 am Sunday worship. Youth sign-up for reading or acting parts is posted on the kiosk in the narthex.



Family Fellowship Event

Thanks to all who joined us for our Family Fellowship event on November 17, where we enjoyed "Inside Out 2" and fresh popcorn with our friends! Looking forward to our next event in February.



Family Sunday School

Please join us on December 8 for a time of family fellowship. From 10:40-11:45 am. We will have stories, crafts, and fun.



Thirty Disciples Participated in Helping Feed the Hungry!

On October 30, our confirmation class, along with a group of dedicated adults, went to the Eagan Feed My Starving Children location and helped pack over 20,500 meals! We learned how our volunteering for this important ministry makes a difference and saves lives. We have another date set for May 21, 2025. How many meals do you think we could pack if we brought a group of 50? Or more?



A St. Philip's Tradition You May Not Know!



For the last five years, starting with the confirmation class of 2020, on the Saturday when the confirmands make their stoles, they also do something else. Before we rehearse the affirmation of baptism (confirmation) liturgy, we carefully tip the kneelers over and the confirmands write their name, the year, and their confirmation Bible verse!

Some classes are bigger than others, so some kneelers have more names, but whenever we are using our kneelers, these siblings in Christ can point to the exact place where they affirmed the promises made at their baptisms and know that their name and Bible verse are part of a legacy of witnessing our shared faith!



2024 Confirmation

Pictured are Reed Anderson, Emery Hedeem, Megan Sieben and David Tireman who affirmed their Baptism and are now Confirmed members of St. Philip's Lutheran Church. Their hand decorated stoles express their faith and their smiles express the happiness on this, their Confirmation Day. Blessings to each and every one.



Temple Talks

Stewardship Temple Talks continued on October 20 with Virginia Spence relating her personal thoughts on St. Philip's 2025 Stewardship theme, "Abiding in God's Abundance" by relating all of the ways "abundance" is evident in St. Philip's ministries. Virginia's own experience on the Worship and Music ministry made her aware of all the people it takes to conduct a Sunday morning worship experience.



On November 17, Alex Zuzek, Vice President of St. Philip's church council gave the final Stewardship temple talk based on the theme "Living in God's Abundance". As a teacher and coach himself, Alex related the need for being abundant in our relationships with each other, and inspiring others to be their best. His membership at St.

Philip's, along with his wife Aleaha, has provided him with an abundance of acceptance and responsibility in his church council role. St. Philip's Stewardship Sunday is December 8, followed by a breakfast.

Leaf Raking for Fellow Members a Clear Blessing

On November 9 a team of SPLC adults and two teens, made life easier for members who struggle with the late fall burden of too many leaves. The leaf raking outreach opportunity has been a tradition and it is very appreciated.



Group shot of most of the team are Micah Villavicencio, Grant Anderson, Nick Clark, Tony Nichols, Carlos Villavicencio, Pastor Geier, and Richard Anderson.

Not pictured are Katy and Andy Lindberg.



Eight to ten filled tarps were hauled off Glenda's property by Nick Clark, Tony Nichols, Micah Villavicencio and Richard Anderson.



Katy Lindberg and husband Andy help with both raking and hauling with their pick-up truck

All Saints Day Observed November 3

Most worshippers came forward to light a candle to honor the memory of those who they had lost. Two tables of candles were provided which allowed all people to participate.



Advent



Ministry Opportunity Fair

On November 3, seven ministry committees displayed their purpose, team people and how to become involved in what they do. Very nice displays were created.



Becky Kaphing, lead education coordinator, and Marjorie Peterson, Sunday School teacher were ready to talk to people about the need for helping in Faith Formation.



Tricia Bremer, Steve Wolverton and Bill Pavlish worked the Buildings and Grounds display and recruited two new members for their team.



Patty Todnem and Sue Cruse, coordinator of the WELCA organization promote their outreach projects and WELCA's monthly Bible Study.

2024 Lefse Making

Two times were offered for members to come and make lefse for the November bake sale. An estimated one hundred twenty packages were made which sell for \$7. A team of mixers are in the kitchen and the rollers and turners are in the Fellowship Room. It's a big task, but lives up to St. Philip's tradition of a fall festive bake sale which includes lefse and in later years, homemade soup. It's a community offering which results in mission outreach.



Geri Holmseth has been "quality control" for years, deciding what gets packaged.



Tim Preston and Pastor Geier roll and turn a mean round of lefse. They are a repeat team.



Sue Cruse, the lead organizer of the lefse making is teamed up with Dave Weisser

Keeping Connected

Hello from Kevin and Erica! We have been formal members of St. Philip's for a whopping six months and counting! We are enjoying our time with this community, and hope to continue building relationships with all of you in the years to come. A big shout out to Erica's colleague, Lizbet Ronning, for inviting us to check out St. Philip's; we are very happy you did.



While we were both living in the twin cities we met each other in a most romantic and opportune of times-half way through a pandemic. We had our first date at St. Paul Brewing, which is housed in the old Hamm's brew house, and a few years later got engaged in the same spot. Consequently, we are happy to share that we will be married at St. Philip's this upcoming August! We both have large and "dynamic" families that are sure to make for a memorable day. Planning has been mostly fun and stress free, but we are still a ways out from the big day.

Erica grew up in Brainerd, Minnesota, while Kevin is from Anoka, Minnesota. Hastings has neither the amount of lakes as Brainerd, nor does it have the same Halloween spirit as Anoka (the self-acclaimed Halloween capital of the word). But we have found this place to have a certain charm to it, and we are happy to call it home.

We came to Hastings in the summer of 2023 as Erica was starting as a family physician in the local Allina clinic. Kevin works as a chaplain for a hospice company in St. Paul. We are both glad that we get to work closely with people at various stages of their lives, and to provide some degree of care and support as we are able. For us both, not all days are easy, but we find a good deal of joy and meaning in most of them.

As we moved to Hastings and settled down, we began to look for a spiritual community that we could call home. We visited a number of churches in the area which all had their own pros and cons. But the welcoming and engaged community of St. Philip's is what had the two of us returning again and again. Similarly, St. Philip's appeared to be the place that we

might feel most comfortable raising a family in the future.

We have a trip coming up! Kevin's brother and sister-in-law live in Stuttgart Germany, and recently gave birth to a little girl. We will be going overseas for a week in early December to meet our new niece with Kevin's whole family. We're going to make a few other stops in Amsterdam and Nuremberg to see some sites, but we are most excited for the Christmas markets. The two of us had gone over to Germany to visit Kevin's brother in 2023, and we had not expected to go back so soon, but we are thrilled to do so. Of note, last time in Germany we were able to tour Wittenberg, the town which sparked the Reformation. We also were able to celebrate Oktoberfest in Munich-learning with a bit of fun!

In town, we enjoy walking the great trails and parks. Schaar's Bluff and Vermillion Falls are among our favorites. But even more so we enjoy hiking Minnesota state parks when we can. Though we have done a lot of them, we are always open to trail recommendations! And since we are relatively new to the area, we will also be taking any food recs you have as well. As the colder months are upon us, we are on the hunt for the best fish fry in town. Thank you all for welcoming us, and spending this time getting to know us.

Happy Holidays,
Erica Swenson and Kevin Ekstrom

We are Terry and Jan Kochendorfer. We became members of St. Philip's in 1987 after the birth of our son, Michael.



Jan grew up a 100% Swede in the LCA church, Richfield Lutheran in Minneapolis. A graduate of Washburn High in Minneapolis and an alum of Gustavus. Jan's major was fine art with a teaching minor. Her first teaching job was as an art teacher at Hastings Junior High. After doing a lousy job teaching, the rest of her 20s were spent in various artsy jobs and some that weren't.

Eventually it dawned on her that she needed an income and attended UWRF where she earned a Learning Disabilities teaching certificate. She did a

better job at that. Then the school closed and a new search began. She finally got a job as a child care licensing social worker with Dakota County and spent twenty-eight years doing that until retirement.

Terry is a Hastings native. He was born at the old hospital on 4th Street. His mom told the story of going into labor, going to the hospital and taking the "elevator" to the third floor maternity ward. The mechanism lifting the elevator was a hand-pulled rope.

He attended Hastings High School, then on to Winona State. After a year, he went to work for 3M for about forty years. His first marriage produced two daughters, one who now lives in Arizona and one in Wisconsin. We have two grandkids.

We met in Hastings and dated for 4 years. When Jan got the county job, Terry figured we could finally give marriage a try. Terry grew up in the Catholic Church, but joined the Lutheran church when we married in 1984. The officiating pastor counseled that Jan would need to acquire a taste for bratwurst and Terry a taste for lefse. We did and we celebrated forty-one years last May.

The attached pic was taken in front of the Velvet Elvis restaurant in Patagonia, Arizona. Terry has always enjoyed Elvis while Jan leans more toward John Denver. Terry has enjoyed golf for more than sixty years and Jan has been a potter for a couple of decades.

We truly enjoy St. Philip's - all the people, opportunities to serve, and especially the kid's Sunday morning fishbowl. We've been richly blessed!



ST. PHILIP’S STAFF

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**ST. PHILIP’S LUTHERAN CHURCH
AND PRESCHOOL**
1401 West 15th Street, Hastings, Minnesota
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Church Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday: 9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Friday: 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Sunday Worship Service:
In Person and Livestream Worship at 9:30 am
(Livestream link on www.splchastings.org,
YouTube and Facebook)

Sunday Education Hour:
Adult Forum at 10:40 am
Sunday School at 10:40 am

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