

St. Philip's Newsletter

Winter 2013

Pastor's Letter:

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Proverbs 29:18

Dear People of St. Philip's,

Solomon, son of King David, was known for his "wisdom." Some of his wisdom is preserved in scripture in the Book of Proverbs. Solomon must have been a man of great vision! He mobilized the Hebrew people who had finally come to dwell in the land of Judah. It was Solomon who triumphantly succeeded in building the long awaited Hebrew Temple in Jerusalem—more glorious than any earthly temple known to humankind. A Temple which found its purpose in being built to the glory of God, a sacred gathering place for God's children who assembled from all nations into one nation of Israel. What can we learn from Solomon and his vision? St. Philip's here in Scotts Valley has been a place of joyous gathering. For the first 10 years without a building, and the next 15 years with a functionally converted building. Now we have hit a critical time in which we are called to vision the possibilities for future growth as a community of compassionate people who love to have a good time, who feel called to share our space with the community at large and who desire a sacred space to gather for worship, education and fellowship.

The year 2012 was a year of tremendous growth for St. Philip's. New members came, milestones were met, we celebrated 25 years. We achieved our goal of becoming a full Parish. During 2012 we began a preliminary effort of creating a strategy for visioning, and found that our first step was to clarify our identity. Before we can find that clarity we must create an effective leadership team. To be an effective leadership team requires each member to function with an attitude of harmonious teamwork. Individual members must make an intentional decision to fully engage in building trust, manage conflict, keep commitments, and hold each other accountable to achieve results.

In order to be a more effective spiritual leader of a congregation moving forward with a visioning process, I take one day each month to go on a guided retreat. I stop everything, go to a convent in Los Gatos where I reflect on scripture, pray and listen to where God is calling us. Additionally, I meet regularly with a resource priest of our Diocese, Rick Matters, Rector of All Saints, Carmel. Fr. Rick guides me and other clergy to create an adaptation of business model leadership and team building for churches of the 21st C. This process will help our new Vestry gain clarity on how to lead St. Philip's. We will find our "corporate legs" as we gain a sense of local accountability with less dependence upon our identity as a Mission Church supported by the Diocese.

On February 10 St. Philip's will gather as a community for our Annual Meeting following the 10am service. First we will have fellowship and food, followed by elections, reports and a presentation of our budget. We'll thank all our Vestry members for their excellent work this past year, and give out-going members Marcus Granger-Jones and Donna Seelbach special praise for three years of dedicated service. And, we welcome Myrna Crooks (Owen) as our next Senior Warden.

We are pleased to have new as well as experienced members stepping forward to run for Vestry positions this year. Dave Munro comes to us after past experience with the United Church of Christ, including serving on a search committee for an associate pastor position. Jim Blessing returns as a long-time member of various Vestries throughout his many years of ministry, including serving at St. Philip's. As of this publication we have others considering a run for office and nominations are open if you feel called to serve Christ in this way.*

As a whole community, our shared vision is first and foremost to be seeped in the love of Christ, to care for people of all ages and circumstances of life, reaching out to invite others into our fellowship of love. It is my prayer that we will strengthen how we incorporate new members, building strategies for future growth that bring us ever closer to God and each other through Christ.

Prayers of peace and prosperity to you and your family as we move forward with a vision of hope for 2013.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Mary & Jim Blessing

(*Please read the item about vestry leadership on p. 2.)

VESTRY LEADERSHIP:

Are You Called to Ministry as a Member of St. Philip's Vestry?

"The vestry is the elected lay leadership of the parish. The vestry is entrusted with the temporal affairs of the church, tasked to work with financial aspects of church life, work with the rector and other lay leaders on program, mission, and evangelism for the good of the church locally, regionally, and nationally. They function as a "trustee" body, making sure the best interests of the local church are being managed on a regular basis. As trustees, they carry a dual responsibility: to carry out a set of legal mandates as officers of a chartered corporation; and to be the decision-makers of a congregation that is committed not merely to the preservation of a physical institution but engagement in ministry and mission that is constantly changing." (From: *Vestry Papers*)

As a mission church, St. Philip's board was known as the Bishop's Committee. Those currently serving will now be called Vestry members. As we move into 2013 we will see 3 of our current members "roll off" the board, and will elect 3 more to take their place. Who is eligible to serve on the Vestry? A parishioner is eligible if they meet these guidelines:

- is a baptized Christian
- is "known to the treasurer" to be a pledging member in the preceding and current year.
- attends Sunday services and parish events on a regular basis
- is willing to participate as a trusting team member, treating others with respect and honor
- is willing to make difficult decisions regarding St. Philip's property and finances
- can commit to regular monthly meetings (time and day of week TBA with new vestry), and will attend accept under circumstances of travel, illness or some other "excused" absence
- will participate in Vestry all-day retreat
- will provide leadership for parish goals

What are primary responsibilities of a Vestry?

- acting as corporate board of directors as a non-profit corporation of the State of California
- identifying goals and ways to achieve and measure them
- working together with clergy and each other to discern and communicate the vision which God leads us, drawing the congregation into mission and ministry
- being good stewards of all resources bestowed upon St. Philip's, which includes creating and managing the church budget
- participating in a mutual ministry review process to assess vestry and clergy performance

If you are intrigued, interested in running for Vestry at Annual meeting, February 2013, please contact Senior Warden Marcus-Granger Jones or Pastor Mary Blessing

St. Philip's 2013 Garden Tour and English Tea Luncheon

"St. Philip's Annual Garden Tour and English Tea Luncheon" needs Gardens to feature on this annual fundraiser for the church. If you are a proud gardener and want to share your favorite gardening secrets, contact **Sheryl McEwan** to let her know about your garden. We hope to get 6-7 gardens to delight our visitors. The Tour and Luncheon will be on May 11, 2013 .

We are also looking for all sorts of volunteers to help with making this event happen. Please consider what you could do to help make this fundraiser happen. Look for the job descriptions to be posted in the foyer.

GARDEN VISION FOR 2013


Our own St Philip's garden is in need of help as well. We have wonderful garden plan for the parkway in front of the church, now we need people to help make the "vision" come to life. This is everyone's opportunity to be a part of St. Philip's Garden vision. It will also be an inviting landscape for everyone traveling SV Drive. Please consider "adopting" a lovely lavender or other plant for \$5.00 or a huge rock or flagstone for the walkway for \$100. The Garden Vision 2013 designed by Sheryl McEwan will be on display at the Annual Meeting if you want to see it, or if you want to have first choice of your favorite plant put a check in the plate and note that it is for the Garden Project.

Julie O'Brien



Financial Facts

2012 End-of-Year Summary

	Total Operating Income 2012	Total Operating Expenses 2012	Surplus for 2012
Actual	\$182,283	\$182,058	\$225
Budgeted	\$186,332	\$187,309	-\$977

Pledge Status at EOY: -\$8,835 (93%)

To request additional information for these reports, or to ask questions, please contact Jane Ellis at dragonsinger47@yahoo.com or 438-7959

IMPORTANT DATES TO SAVE

- Annual Meeting:** February 10, Potluck Brunch following 10 Service
- Ash Wednesday:** Feb. 13, noon and 7pm.
- Vestry Retreat:** February 15-16.
- Lenten Program:** Wednesday evening soup supper February 20-March 20, 6pm-8pm.
- Holy Week:** March 24-30
- Easter Sunday:** March 31

Snow Retreat

The annual church snow retreat will be the weekend of February 1-3. Please contact Nancy Connor at nancy@toadski.com to reserve your spot. There are only 15 rooms available and they are half filled already, so let me know ASAP!

Nancy Connor

Watch For The Light

Watch For The Light. That is the title of an inspiring book of Advent/Christmas readings shared by the Thursday morning reading group. The cover photo is of a low-angled sun throwing shadows of bare trees across a snowy landscape. The graphic is dramatic. But even more dramatic were the writings (poems, sermons, essays) written by a diverse group of people spanning 18 centuries who'd been changed by the light of the Incarnation. Reflecting on these writings I thought about just how powerful that change has been.

This light was not just for a chosen few. At Jesus' birth the light of an especially brilliant star alerted wise men from the east that an important event had occurred. Guided by the star, they made pilgrimage to Bethlehem and offered gifts to the Christ Child signifying that the entire world would be changed as a result of this life. The appearance of the Magi is now celebrated by the church as the second great feast of Christmastide: Epiphany.

Except during the occasional power outage, I wonder if those of us living in the 21st century can even grasp the level of darkness in which the people lived at the time of Christ's birth.

Widespread electrification means we seldom have the opportunity to appreciate the presence of light except in its absence. And it was in profound darkness that the Magi saw the sign of light.

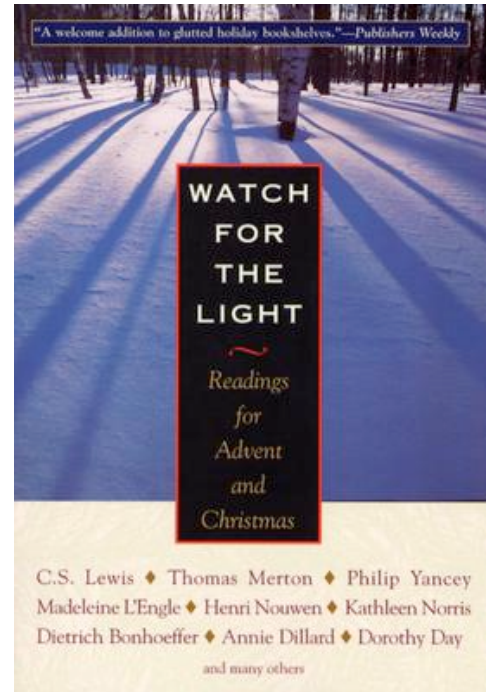
The response of offering gifts on the part of the Wise Men becomes model for us. In a way that's what we do when we offer our pledges in support of the church: recognizing the importance of continuing to seek the light of love and the power of the church to bring change.

You might think the time for submitting pledges past? Isn't it too late? Not if you remember the story by Henry Van Dyke, *The Other Wise Man*. Having been delayed in setting out with his brother magi, Artaban, the other wise man, spends the next 30 years seeking the Christ Child to offer gifts only to find him at Calvary. Despite finding the king he sought at the end of Christ's life, he was not too late. Artaban had spent his life honoring the king by giving his gifts to those in need.

May we keep company with Wise Travelers everywhere in being guided by the Light of Christ's love, prayerfully kindling it within and offering what we can in service to Christ's church.

Grace and peace,

Sally Sutter and the Stewardship Team



Opportunities to Nurture Your Faith

4th Wednesday Discussion Topic: Galatians

Please join us on Wednesday January 23, 7-8 pm in the SP Sanctuary, when Jeremy Gabrielson will offer an introduction to Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Paul has a lot to say to those Galatians (in only six chapters) and Jeremy has a lot to say about Paul!

Paul's letter to the Galatians, one of the earliest documents from the New Testament, has proved to be both inspirational and puzzling to generations of Christians. We will read through portions of St Paul's letter as we discuss the major themes highlighted by Paul and learn more about Paul's gospel and the historical setting of the churches to which he wrote.

Come early at 6:30 to enjoy snacks and get to know other St. Philip's adults. This is an adult discussion group.

Myrna Crooks Owen and Jeremy Gabrielson

Does "Revelations" Scare The Devil Out Of You?

Elaine Pagels, author of the book we're starting to study this year in the Thursday morning "Theology Friends" book group, thinks that knowledge is power, and is proceeding to enlighten us on the last book of the Bible in her latest tome, "Revelation: Visions, Prophecy and Politics In The Book of Revelation". A noted historian and biblical scholar, Ms. Pagels herself admits that it's the strangest book in the Bible -- and the most controversial. Join us on Thursday mornings, 10:30 AM to Noon, as we consider what this puzzling and fascinating part of Scripture may have to tell us in the 21st century.

Fran Soule

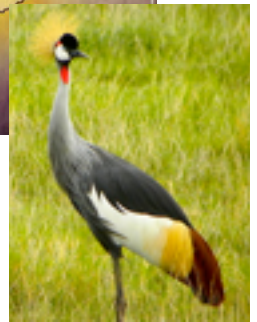


Calling All (Future) Acolytes!

The Acolyte Director has asked me (the Newsletter Editor) to see if any children aged 7 or older might be interested in being an acolyte. Children generally serve only once a month, although there are opportunities to do more. It's a great chance to work closely with Pastor Mary and learn more about how the church works. Plus there are Acolyte Parties every year! Contact Karin if you are interested: 831-461-1218.

Bill Dolby Travels to Tanzania

We're excited to announce that Bishop Mary has asked Bill Dolby to accompany her to one of our Triad partnership Dioceses, Western Tanganyika, Tanzania, Africa in February. Bill will do some teaching about Bible Study techniques to a group of African priests. The church in Tanzania is exploding and they are bringing on new priests who need some training. Bill will be leaving on February 17 and returning on February 27. The cost to the Diocese for the trip is about \$1800. If any of you would like to help defray the cost of the trip for Bill and the Diocese you can make a donation to St. Philips. Just make a note in the memo line that your donation is for "Bill's trip to Africa." Thanks for your prayers for Bill's safety on this trip and for the Holy Spirit to bless his teaching.



SPOS News: A Warm Welcome to CornerTrade, LLC

Please welcome CornerTrade, LLC, an online publishing company, to the St. Philip's Office Suites! Mike Chamberlin and Earl Sondreal have moved their business into room 16 (what used to be the conference room). Mike is the husband of Joanne Chamberlin, who often leads our music when our regulars are not here. We look forward to working with them. Visit The CornerTrade website at: <http://cornertradepublishing.com/>

Welcome To Easy Publishing...



HOW TO MAKE LOVE and Other Godly Thoughts...

by Wallace Clift, J.D., M.Div., Ph.D., D.D

Our secular world packed up Santa Christmas and quickly filled display cases with cupid's images of "love" paraphernalia. But if you truly want to give your loved one something more significant than the pre-packaged "Valentine's Day" of obligatory chocolates, flowers or card, consider the book *How to Make Love and Other Godly Thoughts*. St. Philip's is blessed to have a close personal relationship with the author, Wallace B. Clift, one of the most respected authors of Jungian psychology and father of Bruce Clift. Clift is a gifted priest, lawyer, professor, and psychologist, now retired. His popular book, *Jung and Christianity: The Challenge of Reconciliation*, is a "best seller" amongst colleges and seminaries throughout the country. (I read it myself in Seminary.)



How to Make Love... is a deeply moving memoir which Clift describes as "Godly thoughts" beginning with the premise that "love is one of the forces operating in the universe." (p.1) We are all called to increase the volume of love in the universe by how we live our lives. This force can be accessed through conscious consideration of our unconscious mind through our dreams. Clift says: "Consciousness is the stairway which love inevitably climbs." (p.15) Love is a choice we are invited to make in every aspect of our lives. Clift invites us into reflections on how love is operative in marriage, stating that "Love is nourished in the container of a committed relationship..." (p. 21). To fully experience love in a life-long committed partnership, it is ideal to have each member of the couple grow spiritually and intellectually within this container of love. When one or the other fails to grow it can lead to a loss of love, probable separation, and possible divorce. The fruit of the commitment of marriage as a life-long love relationship is a deeper spiritual happiness for each member of the couple.

**Available on
Amazon here:**

<http://www.amazon.com/Make-Love-Other-Godly-Thoughts/dp/1479329428>



Other topics covered by Clift on how we "make Godly love", adding our share of this positive force in the universe, are: The Christian Idea of Atonement; Theology and Practice of Healing Prayer; Mythology and Christianity; Old Age and Wisdom; Journal Keeping; The Challenge of Old Age; and, of course, About Dreams.

Rev. Dr. Clift was given an honorary doctorate at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, my alma mater, in 2003, during an alumni celebration which I also attended long before my call to serve St. Philip's. To read more about the remarkable life of Wallace and his deeply spiritual and equally talented wife, The Rev. Jean Clift (who has preached here at St. Philip's on occasion) go to CROSSINGS, the Alumni magazine of CDSP: http://cdsp.edu/sites/default/files/faculty-staff/CDSP_Crossings_Fall-Winter03.pdf (If you scroll through carefully you will find a photo of me in a discussion group during the same celebration as the Clifts. We did not meet face-to-face in 2003, yet I wonder if the Holy Spirit especially drew me to that Alumni event, because it is the only time I have ever attended a CDSP Alumni event in my 20+ years since graduating from Seminary!)

Pastor Mary Blessing



Epiphany

The magi arrive from lands east of Palestine bringing gifts for the new king. Herod has a fit and we hear the story of Jesus's baptism. For such a short season Epiphany has a lot going on. While some call it "ordinary time" there is nothing ordinary here. The significance of the magi lies in more than astrology leading people along the path Abraham followed. Isaiah foretold a light that would shine on people who were not part of the Israelite nation. That light shines on, and in and thru, us today. We have become bearers of the incarnation. We are Christians, small versions of the Christ, the Messiah. Epiphany invites to look at the small piece of divine creation within self, carefully and slowly allow that spark, that light to grow. It is time to look at what light reveals. The aha! moment. It is called an epiphany.

And then along comes...

LENT

After the excess of Thanksgiving to New Year's, Lent comes to rescue me from myself. The daylight hours are increasing but the cold chill of winter is still here. I don't want to go outdoors. I'd much rather stay in and read, or sew, or bake something to warm up the house. Lent explicitly asks me to slow down, look around, reevaluate habits I picked up over the holiday and forgot to discard. I take this time to sort thru information and decide what to keep and what to delete. The church calls us all to a season of reflection that includes all of personhood. What spiritual health can I include in my life? How does giving time to spiritual impact my physical health? How does ignoring my physical health impact my spiritual health? This year I plan to take a good hard look at my home environment to see how I really live. Lent is a time to put into thoughtful action what the light of Epiphany has revealed.



Lizz Beitzel for the Liturgical Arts Team

Youth News

I have been at St. Philips for 4 months and it has continued to grow on me. I have enjoyed getting to know more and more youth and adults. This Christmas our youth had a great opportunity to be involved in the adopt the family project. We raised \$160 from our congregation and went shopping at Target for a mother, her 2 children and 2 nephews. The mother and her children were so appreciative and it was a blessing for me to get to know her. I can't wait for us to be involved in more service work.



I am planning on bringing students to HAPPENING which will run from Friday, February 22 at 7 pm to Sunday, February 24 at 4 pm at the Church of the Resurrection in Pleasant Hill.

Every young person needs a space to experience unconditional love in community. That's the special purpose of Happening, a unique weekend retreat led by youth, for youth, dedicated to diving deeper in faith and relationship. In February 2013, all youth from 9th-12th grades are invited to take part in *Happening 30: Give Yourself to Love*.

The cost of Happening is \$50 per student, and ample scholarship funding is available. No one is turned away for financial reasons.

Register here:

<https://diocal.wufoo.com/forms/happening-30-give-yourself-to-love/>

Check out the website

<http://www.diocal.org/events/happening-30>

God with us!

Kyle Dunning

Next Playdates for the Hocus Pocus Players

- The playgroup is open for all - it will be most age appropriate for those up to 6 years of age. The playgroup is set up to allow both parents and children a chance to play and connect with one another.
- We will meet at Hocus Pocus Park in Scotts Valley (easy access for those who are local or those who may be coming from highway 17).
- We will meet every 3rd Friday of the month from 11:30am - 1:30pm (arrive at anytime in this 2 hour time frame). The next 3 months' dates will be: **2/15, 3/15**. *Please feel free to bring lunch or a snack.
- Those who are interested, should let Courtney Messer know by sending an email tocmesser222@yahoo.com or by calling her at 408.569.7724. Of course, anyone can drop by at anytime without prior notification.
- A reminder email/text will be sent out prior to the playgroup to remind those who have expressed interest.
- In the event of rain, we will meet at the church for some fun playtime indoors!

Courtney Messer, Playgroup Coordinator



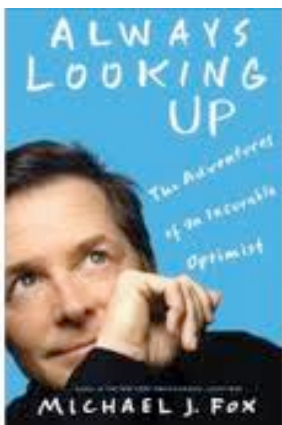


Calling All Women Who Love to Read and Socialize!

The St. Philip's Women's Book Club (we really need a catchier name for the group – any suggestions?) meets every second Monday from 10am to 12pm in the church sanctuary. We share snacks and any exciting news we have – is there anyone left who doesn't know that Susan Seaburg is going to be a grandmother?! If so, make her day and ask to see the sonogram picture of Sam, it's amazing! Congratulations, Susan and Judy, and, of course, Liz and her husband!



We eventually get around to discussing the book we just read, which has been recommended by one of the group. There is no restriction to the selection and we read a wide variety. We select books by inviting recommendations from the group, and about every six months, if the list is long, we vote to schedule six or so books for the upcoming months. It is a great couple of hours to relax and enjoy good company, even if you haven't read the book. The discussion always manages to range into topics which are not limited by lack of knowledge of the book! If you have the time and the inclination, we'd love to have you join us, be it one time – because the book intrigued you – occasionally, or monthly.



Upcoming books:

February: *In the Bleak Midwinter* by Julia Spencer Fleming

March: *War Brides* by Helen Bryan

April: *The Unquiet Bones* by Mel Starr

May: *Always Looking Up : The Adventures of an Incurable Optimist* by Michael J. Fox

June: *Sister* by Rosamund Lupton

If you would like to be added to the email distribution list, or receive a synopsis of the above books, please contact me at dragonsinger47@yahoo.com.

Jane Ellis

