

# St. Philip's Newsletter

March 2013

## Pastor's Letter:

*"...the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go." Luke 10:1*

Dear people of St. Philip's,

Jesus trained his disciples to be prudent in ministry, sending them out in pairs to share the good news. Following his wilderness journey, in which Jesus spent 40 days alone in deep prayer, Jesus himself always chose 3 closest disciples, Peter, James and John, to go with him in prayer. Did Jesus learn a valuable lesson in the wilderness, that it is not good for God's children to be alone? Although we certainly do need time alone, to quietly, prayerfully seek God's presence, perhaps it is best that we have someone near enough to care for us if the need arises--someone who is praying for us while we seek our deeper connection with God.

Something very real, very reassuring happens when people share ministry, in prayerful communion with one another while working to fulfill God's mission. Whether it is the work of the Great Commandment ("Love God first and your neighbor as yourself" expressed in good works such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger) or the Great Commission ("Go into the world baptizing all nations in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit") Jesus calls us to ministry together. To that end, I invited our Vestry to develop "prayer partners", chosen at random, so that each of us could offer regular prayer, and each would know that he/she is prayed for on a regular basis. [Read more of Vestry Retreat elsewhere in this Newsletter.]

Our Vestry also considered the possibility of having our entire congregation choose prayer partners, but we didn't have a clear sense of the practicality of how to create congregational prayer partners. When an effort was made some years ago to create a system of prayer and "shepherding" there was an unexpected sense that it was too contrived. We are seeking a more "natural" but intentional way of creating prayer partnerships throughout St. Philip's, so that no one is forced into prayer, but no one is left out either. Suggestions are welcomed! In the meantime, our Vestry leadership team will engage in prayer partnerships. Presumably the fruit of our efforts will become evident, and perhaps this will lead to a more wide-spread process of prayer partners throughout the congregation.

Another form of "prayer partnership" and shared ministry will come our way this Spring/Summer when Vicar Jacqueline Rodwell, of Emmanuel Church, Cheltenham, Diocese of Gloucester, England, comes to St. Philip's in a pulpit exchange with me. As part of my 6 week Sabbatical for 2013, Vicar Jacqueline will preach and serve at St. Philip's (May 21-June 9). I will preach and serve with her congregation those weeks, then I will take a pilgrimage to the Scottish Island of Iona, to engage in one week of living the monastery life, another form of "prayer partnership", in an intentional community of prayer. [Details of my Sabbatical time will be shared in future Newsletters.]

It is our hope that the time Vicar Jacqueline and I spend exchanging ministries will be fruitful for each of our congregations as well as informational for each of us. By sharing in ministry this way we imagine broadening our perspectives on how the Anglican Communion shares the Gospel in an ever-changing, pluralistic world.

Prayers of peace have emerged since I began writing this article and our county was shocked into another tragic slaying of innocents: this time 2 Santa Cruz City Police doing their job. In response, I invited the congregation to join me at St. Philip's where we opened wide our doors to invite the Scotts Valley community into prayer. Rather than succumb to violence and hatred, we prayed for peace and reconciliation, centering ourselves in the hope of God's redemption, even as His beloved Son suffered a violent death upon the cross. Somehow, Jesus' mercy is so wide as to forgive those "who know not what they do"... God brings glory in the rising of Christ, that we, too may have life everlasting.

Peace to you in Christ,

*Pastor Mary & Jim Blessing*



## Vestry Retreat

Nestled in the redwoods at the rustic Dolby family cabin in “Brackney” (Ben Lomond), St. Philip’s 2013 Vestry gathered February 15-16 for a weekend spiritual/planning retreat. The focus developed by former Senior Warden, Marcus Granger-Jones, current Senior Warden, Myrna Crooks, and Pastor Mary was on building trust and going deeper as a leadership team.

Friday night included outgoing members Donna Seelbach and Marcus Granger-Jones, who participated with continuing and new members in fellowship, a fabulous meal, and reflections upon our ministry over the past year. Saturday, Myrna and Pastor Mary led the new team in a process of discernment that included knowing one’s own gifts and call as well as pairing up into prayer partners. Using the Gospel of Luke’s description of Jesus sending his disciples out in pairs to share the good news in homes and villages throughout the land, we considered ways that we would like to prayerfully work in ministry to share Jesus’ good news in Santa Cruz County.

Vestry members who have served previously remarked how deeply spiritual this retreat was for them compared to past experiences. Here is a sample of what Sally Sutter, Clerk and Vestry member, writes about her experience on the weekend: “...although the 2013 Vestry retreat may not have accomplished all the planners had in mind, I have no doubt that the seeds of possibility were planted deep in the soil of trust, mutual concern and the desire to serve Christ’s church. But it was hard work. And though I was tired ... there was refreshment as well in the powerful realization that we’re all working together. Thank you for all your heartfelt efforts to design a retreat that strengthened and encouraged us. I particularly like the idea of prayer partners to know that we are upholding one another in God’s love.”

How many board meetings across the country begin and end in prayer? Probably not very many. The Vestry of a church serves the same function as a Board -- making the same critical decisions that are needed to run a company. But when the meeting is opened with prayer, Christ is invited to the meeting. As the Vestry begins their diligent work serving St. Philip’s in 2013, the tradition of praying to open and close each meeting will continue. The Vestry of St. Philip’s humbly requests that you pray for each Vestry member and our Treasurer and Pastor this year.

St. Philip’s 2013 Vestry: Myrna Crooks, Julie O’Brien, Sally Sutter, Jose Gonzalez, Victoria Dobson, Jim Blessing, Tod Connor, Dave Munro. Treasurer: Jane Ellis

*Myrna Crooks, Senior Warden,  
and Pastor Mary Blessing*



## Lent, Holy Week and Easter Services:



Wednesdays in Lent February 20 – March 20	6pm: Soup Supper 7pm: Bible Lessons, Lectio Divina
Sundays in Lent February 17 – March 17	9am: Dr. Jeremy Gabrielson, Ph.D., Paul’s Letter to the Galatians
March 24, Palm Sunday	8am & 10am: Procession of the Palms
March 28, Maundy Thursday	6pm: “Jesus’ Last Supper”, foot-washing, prayer vigil
March 29, Good Friday	Noon: Service with Community Covenant, at St. Philip’s 6pm: Stations of the Cross, at St. Philip’s
March 31, Easter	8am and 10am: Festive Celebration of Christ’s Resurrection After 10am service: Easter Egg Hunt and Festive Coffee Hour

## Notes on the Deanery Meeting, February 23, 2013

*Donna Seelbach, Delegate to convention*

The meeting convened at St. John's Chapel in Monterey. (Incidentally, the mission of St. John's "is a Trinitarian-Christian Episcopal Church which strives to pass on the Apostolic Faith as embodied in Catholic Tradition, the doctrine and discipline of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles of Religion." There is much variety in our diocese, this being one example of one Parish's emphasis)!

First of all, the value of the unity of the Diocese was discussed, and ways to grow toward this unity. Communication through the website is very important, especially as we develop new missions in the region.

There were four presentations from missions. St. Philip's was first, as we have transitioned from a mission to a Parish. Steve Dodds, Pastor Mary, and Donna Seelbach each gave a portion of a presentation about our history in the diocese, and our vision for the future as a Parish. St. Philip's is positioned very well in our community for offering several services to Scotts Valley, and we do a great job, providing space for Scouts, 12 Step programs, Toastmasters, spaces in the parish for drama and music, our office rentals upstairs, and our Second Harvest ministries. We will expand our outreach as we renovate our garden areas by creating a user-friendly landscape. This endeavor will take into consideration a possible Labyrinth, a wandering path leading to special quiet places for meditation and reflection, and an information box near the bus stop so people can pick up a flyer describing St. Philip's programs.

Central to each presentation at the Deanery meeting was the theme of how to reach into communities with our ministries. Referencing Bishop Mary's homily last November, ideas such as becoming good listeners, thinking outside the box, and opening the church facilities to our respective communities were shared. There were obvious concerns about gang activities in certain missions in the Diocese---how to prevent this, and what strategies to use. Some success has been evidenced at Trinity Gonzales, a small mission near the Salinas valley, through an outreach for families with children. Gang prevention starts with what is good and what is right with our kids.

On March 23, at All Saints, Watsonville, there will be a panel discussion including representatives from St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Pajaro Valley Unified School District, the Watsonville Police Department, the Monterey Bay area Sheriff's office, and our Diocesan representative, Bishop Mary. The title of the conversation will be "Thriving Community for our Kids." A consensus among all parishes and missions in the diocese is that community is important and youth needs fostering. This youth event on March 23 is designed to give the Watsonville community an opportunity to learn about what we have, and how we could best serve these at risk youth. Information about this event is on the table in the narthex next to the guest book. I would encourage everyone who is interested in the role of church in community to consider attending this event, as it will be educational and informative.



**Pastor Mary baptizes a very happy Gavin B.**







**Peace, Power and Youth**  
A Community Conversation

**March 23, 2013**

437 Rogers Avenue, Watsonville  
All Saints' Episcopal Church 10 - noon

### Save The Date

"Violence prevention starts with what is good and right,  
not with what is bad or wrong"

Even before the tragic shooting of two Santa Cruz Police Officers on February 26 the Youth of All Saints Episcopal Church Watsonville and Cristo Rey Mission Church were making plans to have a County-Wide conversation regarding youth, power and peace in our community. Motivated by recent events of violence on the international, national and local levels, these youth seek to bring together leaders of faith, education and law enforcement to speak with youth, parents, non-profit organizations, schools and community members to identify opportunities for collaboration to allow youth and the community to thrive. Episcopal Bishop Mary Grave-Reeves and Roman Catholic Bishop Richard Garcia will join the panel discussion along with other civic leaders. All of Santa Cruz County is invited to participate. St. Philip's youth are invited to attend with our Youth Mentor, Kyle Dunning . 831-332-2001.

## Youth News

I can't believe its March, which marks a half a year that I have been working at St. Philips. The time has flown by and at the same time it feels like I already have some old friends here. March also starts the beginning Scotts Valley middle school's boys volleyball. I was the coach last year and have signed on again. Pray for me as I minister to students in a secular role. Of course there are legal restrictions on what I can say in a public school, but I can be an example of Christ through my actions.

My goal for March is to get a group of us to lead worship and eat dinner with people in economic hardship at Elm Street Mission downtown Santa Cruz . They need help on either Thursday, Friday, or Saturdays from 4-6pm. I personally know the director and have brought groups there twice before. We have to sign up ahead of time because it fills up fast with other churches and volunteer groups. I want our group to be all ages. but this is a great opportunity for youth to understand that those with economic hardship are people just like you and I.

*God with us,*

*Kyle Dunning*



## Come Make Palm Crosses!

Behind the scenes planning and preparations for Easter are underway! Opportunities to add your contributions abound.

On Saturday March 24th at 9 AM. a group of us will be making the palm crosses that will be handed out after Palm Sunday services March 25th. Please come join us for happy conversation while learning a new craft. With enthusiastic help we should be done by 10 or 10:15AM.

*Barbara Lyon & Liturgical Arts committee*



## Calla Lilies Needed

The Altar Guild is searching for home grown calla lilies!!! Several of our parishioners are sensitive to the fragrance of traditional lilies so we try to use a combination of home grown and traditional lilies. All three families who have donated calla lilies in the past have moved away from their calla lily gardens. Please let Barbara Lyon 438-0770 or Elizabeth in the office know if you or a neighbor have calla lilies to donate.

We enthusiastically encourage you to bring both long stem blossoms and leaves. These flowers can come to the office

Thursday, 3/28

through early Saturday 3/30.

There will be buckets of water sitting beside the name tag holder into which you can place the calla lilies. Thank you for your much needed help with this!



## 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. **Of particular concern** is the lack of an event coordinator for this important fundraiser. Please think about filling this vital role--you will have plenty of helpful experienced hands to support you in this job.

### 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.

*Julie O'Brien*



## “Sacred Collage” Gathering

Clean out your closets and attics. Bring images from magazines, cards, old books, photographs and bring them to this fun workshop taking place at Brackney Cabin in Ben Lomond on Saturday, April 13 from 10am until 3pm. We will explore the use of images to connect with the sacred in and around us.

Bring glue sticks, decoupage glue, scissors and collage materials. If you are interested in a one dimensional collage, bring a piece of mat board at least 2 ply, any size. However, Soul Cards, a collage technique for connecting with our inner visions, are usually 5” by 7”. Larger formats are welcome if desired. If you are making boxes or shrines, the base can be obtained at any local crafts store or thrift shop. These can be any size and made of wood or sturdy cardboard. A few boxes will also be available for purchase.

- Bring a guest or two whom you think might be interested.
- Directions to the cabin will be provided closer to the event.
- Bring a bag lunch and snacks to share.
- Drinks will be provided
- We ask a donation of \$10.00- \$15.00 to cover costs for the cabin rental.

*Donna Seelbach*



**"Happy Child"**

Artist: Dr. Laurie Andreoni

Description: I am the one who embraces the innocent joys of life

## WANTED: ST. PHILIP'S VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Our parish is in need of a volunteer Communications Coordinator to announce news and events to the parish and the community:

Tasks include:

- ~ Work with webmaster in keeping website current
- ~ Prepare occasional media press releases and send to local area papers, local churches and our Diocese
- ~ Work with Pastor Mary, Senior Warden and office manager on service leaflet announcements, occasional email blasts and maintaining the parish calendar of events

Perks:

- ~ Utilize your creativity
- ~ Be an insider about what goes on at St. Philip's
- ~ Spread the Good News

If you have fun with words, like to communicate, are willing to meet deadlines, and have some time most weeks to attend to this important task, please contact Myrna Crooks 831-295-9479 or [myrnacrooks@gmail.com](mailto:myrnacrooks@gmail.com).





## The Face of Love

My younger daughter, Liz, and I were reminiscing about our years in Germany when she brought up an experience she especially remembered. Liz was six when we first moved there and her dad's duties as battalion chaplain meant lots of absences when his unit deployed for training. These field exercises could sometimes be as long as six weeks and we all missed him. Liz demonstrated her feelings in a unique way and a pattern soon developed. I first noticed this once when the photo of my husband I'd kept on my dresser went missing. That night as I was putting Liz to bed I saw the picture on her night table and commented, "So, that's where dad's picture is!" Her eyes welled with tears as she shared she was afraid she would forget what her dad looked like. In that confession she expressed a universal concern. We all want to be reminded what love looks like.



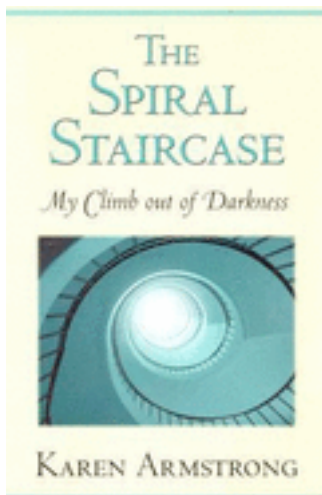
There's a powerful Biblical foundation for this in the Genesis story of Jacobs' reunion with his brother Esau. After a 20 year separation ignited by Jacobs's betrayal of Esau, Esau's gracious welcome prompts Jacob to proclaim: "To see your face is like seeing the face of God now that you have received me favorably." (Genesis 33:10 NIV) Like seeing the face of God! Maybe that's one of the reasons I return to St. Philip's each Sunday morning or choose to spend time with family and friends. I'm looking for the face of God. And I have not been disappointed.

But it also got me to wondering: How faithful am I in offering the face of God to others? Surely this is one gift we can each give one another that is not dependent on our abilities, bank account or time. This Lenten season I'm spending time in personal examination of just how I do offer the face of love. Do I limit loving behavior only to those who are pleasant to me? Or only if I have the time? The more I think about it the more I realize how important it is to see the face of God's love. Isn't that what the Easter event has done: shown us just how deep and far and wide God's love for us is?

I'm grateful to the parish of St. Philip's for showing me the face of God's love when I first arrived and pray that we might continue to be faithful stewards of showing others: This is what love looks like.

Grace and peace,

*Sally Sutter and the Stewardship Team*



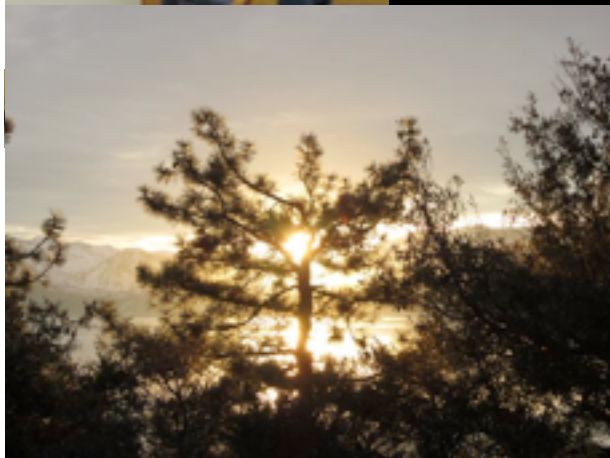
## Up The Down (Spiral) Staircase

St. Philip's Theology Friends Book Group is reading/studying Karen Armstrong's wonderful memoir, The Spiral Staircase. Armstrong is a provocative, original thinker on the role of religion in the modern world. This book is a page-turner, an engrossing story of spiritual and physical collapse and recovery. Our discussions are lively and fascinating. If you'd like to find out for yourself, come join us Thursday mornings from 10:30am to noon in the worship space.

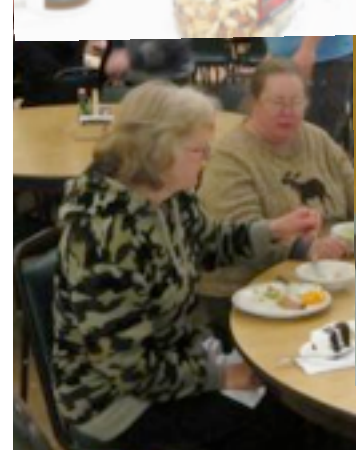
*Fran Soule*



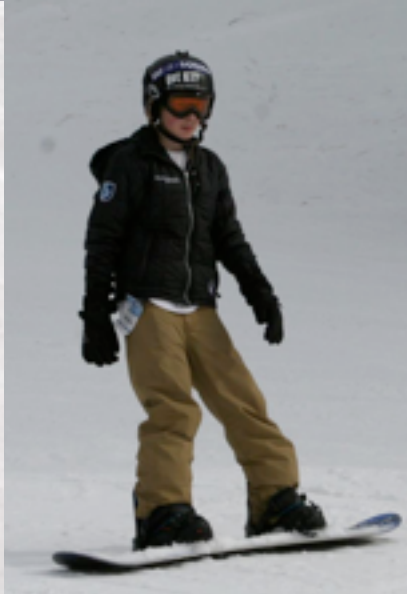
# St. Philip's Winter Retreat 2013









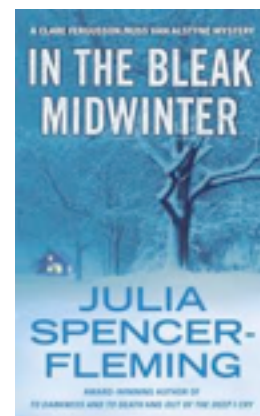






## Calling All Women Who Love to Read and Socialize!

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](mailto:dragonsinger47@yahoo.com).

Jane Ellis

