



June 15, 2021

Volume 65, Issue 12

PHILIP-EYE

THE ABCS OF LGBTQIA+

St. Philip's Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee is pleased to sponsor this series of articles on matters of gender and sexual identity. St. Philip is a member of both the [Covenant Network of Presbyterians](#) and [More Light Presbyterians](#), organizations that work for the full inclusion of persons of all gender and sexual identities in the church and in society.

On **August 1**, St. Philipians Scott Easterly and Bill Holden will celebrate their sixth wedding anniversary, and St. Philip will celebrate with them the first same-sex wedding performed in our sanctuary following the amendment of the PC(USA) *Book of Order* to define marriage as “a unique commitment between two people.”



The PC(USA) traveled a long road with its LGBTQ members and friends to come to this point. Part 2 of the Church's constitution, *The Book of Order*, which is its governing document, for years required “fidelity” for married persons and “chastity” for single persons who the church would ordain as deacons, elders, or ministers. This was widely interpreted (though not so at St. Philip) to bar gay persons — including those in faithful, committed relationships — from ordination (though the standards were

rarely applied to unmarried straight persons). The *Directory for Worship* also defined marriage as being between “a woman and a man.”

Over many years of debate and introspection, various amendments were proposed within the governing bodies of the Church to amend the ordination standards, though none passed until 2011, when a change to the constitution replaced “fidelity” and “chastity” with “submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”

Then in 2015, the required majority of presbyteries voted in favor of an amendment to change the denomination's definition of marriage so that same-sex weddings could be conducted by PC(USA) pastors and in PC(USA) churches. Though the amendment was technically approved within the denomination on March 17, the Presbytery of New Covenant voted at its stated meeting on March 21 (held at St. Philip!) in support of the current definition of marriage. The PC(USA)'s new definition of marriage went into effect on June 21, and on June 26 the US Supreme Court released its ruling legalizing same-sex marriage in all 50 states. The way was as clear as it could possibly be to welcome all persons into the joys and responsibilities of the marriage covenant. Accordingly, Scott and Bill had their wedding August 1, 2015 in our Sanctuary. John and Keatan officiated. On the next page is John's sermon from that day.

Rev. Dr. John W. Wurster
Pastor, Head of Staff

Rev. Keatan King
Associate Pastor

Rev. Omar Rouchon
Associate Pastor

Rev. Kallie Pitcock
Pastoral Resident

Dr. Randall Swanson
Director of Music

Dr. Matthew Dirst
Organist

Cecy Duarte
Children's Music Associate

Micah Meyers
Art Director

Denise Ferrell
Bookkeeper

Wilbert Parada
Facilities Supervisor

Dimas Parada
Custodian

Lorrie Castle
Office Manager
Newsletter Editor

Susan Estill
Editor Emerita

IN CELEBRATION OF THE MARRIAGE OF SCOTT EASTERLY AND BILL HOLDEN

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Love is patient, the Bible says (1 Corinthians 13:4). Indeed, patience is the first description Paul offers in this famous list. Love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude; love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; love does not rejoice in wrongdoing; love rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. All of that is true. But it seems worth noting that before Paul gets to any of those things, at the very top of that eloquent list, Paul tells us that love is patient. Patience is love's first quality.

A patient love waits, hopes, and remains steadfast, trusting in its strength and power and potential. Patient love does not require social acknowledgment or legal recognition or religious endorsement in order to be true. The patience of love is born of the conviction that love cannot be stopped or denied or defeated.

Scott and Bill surely have shown us what a patient love looks like. Having been committed to one another in love for some twenty-eight years, they have steadfastly borne witness to love's possibilities, even as the culture and the law and the church have hidden behind closed minds and closed hearts. And yet for all of our corporate intolerances and misperceptions, love's power remains stronger still. So we gather today - in this country, in this state, in this church - to celebrate love in all of its fullness as Scott and Bill re-affirm their commitment and enter into marriage. I am grateful for the patient love that made this day possible, a patient love shown by Bill and Scott and by so many, for so long. Not passive, not resigned, not apologetic, but patient, steadfast, faithful.

We love because God first loved us, the Bible teaches (1 John 4:19). Accordingly, we learn about love's patience from the patient love God has shown us. God, who has formed us in God's own image, graciously and lovingly sets us free to seek relationship with God and one another. God's way with us is freedom, not coercion. We abuse this freedom, wandering far afield, squandering what we've received, living selfishly, giving ourselves to idols and worshipping the works of our own hands. Yet God remains steadfast in love with us and God remains abundant in love for us, patiently waiting, as a parent longs to welcome the prodigal child home, hopefully waiting for us to return to the fullness of life God intends, earnestly waiting for us to claim the image of God in which we were made. God's love is patient, forgiving, restoring, self-giving, never-ending. That's the love God has shown us in Jesus Christ.

Scott and Bill, this is the love reflected in your lives. It is

the love that has brought you to this place, to this moment. It is the love that has brought you through the long journey. It is the love that has proven stronger than the despisers and the legislators and the judges and the ministers. It is the love that we have seen in you that has in turn brought us much joy. It is the love I pray will continue to be at the center of your life together.

It is the love represented at this table, where bread is broken and given, and wine is poured out in abundance, and the invitation is relentlessly shared. No one is coerced, but all are invited. Our host patiently waits for us. That's how love is. Thankfully, that's how love is.

Amen.

Rev. Dr. John W. Wurster
St. Philip Presbyterian Church
August 1, 2015

(Scott and Bill retired to Georgia in February. Their mailing address is 19 Ontario Lane, Hoschton GA 30548.)



SAVE THE DATE &
WATCH YOUR INBOX
JUNE 28-JULY 2

Come taste and see at the Daily Bread Cafe - Staycation Bible School 2021! Our virtual program will be released the week of **June 27**. This summer we will explore God's hospitable love by sensing our way through food stories in the Bible - using scripture lessons, arts and crafts, music, cooking and more.

If you are interested in leading a segment in our virtual offering or have any questions, please contact omar@saintphilip.net.

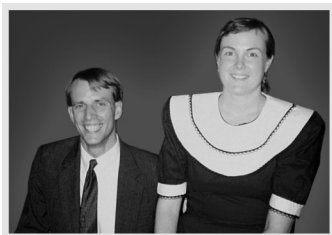


Richard Johnson and Meg Scott Johnson congratulate John. Dimas Parada always available on Sundays for a photo.



SAINT PHILIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF PASTOR JOHN WURSTER'S ORDINATION

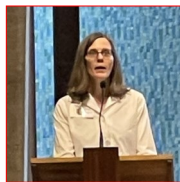
Saint Philip Presbyterian Church celebrated the 30th anniversary of Pastor John Wurster's Ordination on June 13. John was ordained at his home church, Fain Presbyterian Church in Wichita Falls Texas on



June 13, 1990. Fain Presbyterian Church is where he met Deborah Burks, his wife. John has served as Pastor and Head of Staff at St. Philip Presbyterian Church since 2012. 'It is hard to believe,' he said, 'that it has been nine years.' Prior to his time at St. Philip, John served as Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Kerrville Texas for five years. Before moving to Kerrville, John served at two Presbyterian churches in Ohio as an Associate Pastor, for six years in each church. During this time, Deb was an Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University. John's first pastoral call was to the Philadelphia area, where he served in three churches over a four-year period as an Interim Associate Pastor and Interim Pastor.



Deb Burks and John in yet another receiving line, just one of the job duties of a pastor and his wife.



Cathy Patterson, elder and member of the PNC which brought John to St. Philip nine years ago spoke during worship on June 13. Here are her remarks:

Here is a word for the day: *Trigesimus*. That's Latin for 30th. Now, John hasn't been around for quite so long that he grew up speaking Latin at home. But it seems fitting to use a special word, a historic word, to recognize the 30th anniversary of John's ordination. It was 30 years ago *to the day*—June 13, 1991—that John was ordained by Palo Duro Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church USA. He has been a working pastor from that day to this—that's well over a thousand sermons, not to mention everything else a pastor does. Parish ministry makes heavy demands, and many clergy don't reach 30 years in ministry. It is a testament to John's sense of call and commitment that today we celebrate his three decades of Christian ministry, with gratitude for his faithful service.

The years since 1991 have been full of change and flexibility. John has served in seven churches in many different positions, from Interim to Associate to Head Pastor. His churches have been small and large, urban, suburban, and small-town, in three different states, with different outlooks. He has used his gifts in community organizations; in teaching at a seminary; in writing books and articles. And he has served in a rapidly-changing world these last 30 years, from the end of the Cold War to the current cries for social justice. Through it all, John has always been open to helping the church be "reformed and always reforming", finding new ways to share God's love with all. These last 15 months have been an exceptional challenge. Who knew, 30 years ago, that you would have to learn how to "do church" with no congregation present, preach in a mask, and marshal public health data along with scripture passages?

But if much has changed over these 30 years, John's ministry remains steadfast and true and faithful. John's essential message speaks of hope and hospitality: God is BIG, and loves all of us, and all of who we are. Christ's Church is also big, and all are welcome. And it is good to be the church *together*, serving God and neighbors. These beliefs form the foundation to who John is and what he does, both in the church and beyond it.

So John, on your Trigesimus, your 30th anniversary of ordained ministry, your St. Philip family recognizes and celebrates you for three decades of faithful leadership in local congregations and in the church more broadly. We rejoice that Deb has always shared the journey with you, an equal partner on the long and winding road. We thank you especially for your inspired pastoral leadership of our congregation for the last 9 years. And we give thanks to God for you and Deb, for the Spirit that led you into ministry and that led you to Houston to share part of your 30 years in ministry with us. Blessings as you continue your journey.

By Cathy Patterson

WHO'S ZOOMING WHOM?

A few of the groups at St. Philip continue to meet during this time via Zoom and other video conference services—the session has had meetings, book club, church committees and Church and Society. We even have Sunday Coffee Hour. If you would like to participate in future meetings, please contact the appropriate group's leader.

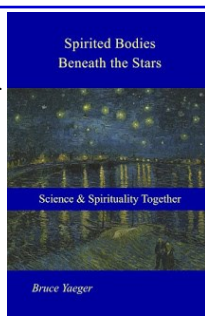
WOMEN'S MONTHLY BOOK CLUB—This self-led, interactive group produces lively discussions and wonderful fellowship. Our next meeting is **July 8** at 7 p.m. when we will be discussing *The Giver of the Stars* by Jojo Moyes. We are happy to gather again in person. Details as to location for meeting will be. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Nina Lambright or Sarah O'Dell at sarah.odell6@gmail.com.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY WITH JOHN WURSTER—A look via Zoom at the Bible readings for the coming Sunday meets on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. or 3:30 p.m. Email John for details and to get on the list - john@saintphilip.net

PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP
Men of all ages are welcome to participate in this self-led group. The Men's Weekly Fellowship meets each Friday **via Zoom** at noon through **this Friday** and then will be off for the summer. Please contact Gary Gardner at ggardne148@aol.com if you would like to join or know the current material they are discussing.

CHURCH & SOCIETY—9:30 a.m. **via Zoom**—will resume on Rally Day, **September 12**.

Congratulations to Bruce Yaeger for publishing another book that may be of interest to you. Find out more at <https://spiritedbodies.blogspot.com/>
Bruce has led classes in Church & Society many times.



Ladies of St. Philip come out to celebrate the 30th anniversary of John's ordination.

Left: Judy Hartman, Cathy Patterson, and Nancy Young

Right: Laura and Anne Marie Burgess



WORSHIP IN PERSON

MIDWEEK PRAYER SERVICE

Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. This service is live-streamed from the Sanctuary and also available for later viewing on our website.

SUNDAY WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

We will continue to have both services in the Sanctuary. Capacity is limited to provide for adequate distancing. Masks are required, and advanced registration is necessary at this [link](#). The 11:00 a.m. service will be live-streamed as usual. About 30 minutes in length, the 9:00 a.m. service will include the reading and proclamation of Scripture, sermon, along with the prayers of the people and organ voluntaries. The 11:00 a.m. service will include a fuller liturgy, as well as anthems from the staff singers in the choir loft and organ voluntaries.. We continue to assess emerging guidance and current conditions in light of our situation at St. Philip as we seek the best course for our diverse congregation. If you have trouble with the registration or are not online, please call/text Lorrie Castle (832-262-1244).

The Session's Going Forward task force continues to monitor conditions and to seek a safe course for our life together at St. Philip.

Thank you for your generosity. Our Communion Offering in May provided \$342 to the PCUSA's annual Pentecost Offering, which benefits children, youth, and young adults. We know how important it is to give young people a good foundation in faith, in education, and in life. The Pentecost Offering helps us support the development of our young people through ministries of education, spiritual formation events like the 4,000+ gathering called the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, and through service as Young Adult Volunteers. In addition, 40% of this offering remains in the local community, and St. Philip Mission Committee designated that this will support CCSC's Back-to-School program which received \$228, providing school supplies to underserved kids from pre-K up to high school. You can find out more at:

<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/pentecost/> and

<https://ccschouston.org/how-we-help/children-youth-programs/back-to-school/>

The **July** Communion offering will benefit The Women's Home. The mission of The Women's Home is to help women in crisis regain their self esteem and dignity, empowering them to return to society as productive, self sufficient individuals. www.thewomenshome.org



THANK YOU, RANDALL!



For five years and one pandemic Randall Swanson has been our Director of Music. As we mark the fifth anniversary of his arrival at St. Philip, we give thanks for the ways he has enriched our common life and led us in our fundamental task – the worship of God. This position requires many different talents, from playing and conducting to planning and administering; and Randall capably fulfills these tasks week after week. Randall's creative spirit and passion

for excellence inspire us to use well all that we have received as we seek to glorify God. Amidst the peculiar challenges for singing in this past year, Randall has been especially resilient in finding ways for the songs of our faith to continue. I'm grateful for his five years at St. Philip and for his partnership in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

John Wurster

SAVE THE DATE

In-person **Alternative Market** is back

November 14

9:45 a.m.—12:45 p.m.

The Alternative Market benefits the mission partners of St.

Philip and gives you the opportunity to gift shop with a cause. We also include a live auction, if you have theatre, music or sports tickets you would like to donate, please contact Hope Wilmarth. Donations of tangible items are welcomed too.

Attention St. Philip crafters, artists and sewers

We plan to have a made-by-hand crafters' table; if you make cards, jewelry, quilts or other items that can be sold to benefit a good cause, contact Hope Wilmarth if you have items to donate. hlwilmarth@hotmail.com



Rev. Keatan King, Rev. Dr. Nathan Carlin, and big sister Cohen welcomed Zoe Jane to their family this week.

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE ST. PHILIP CHURCH?

Just curious: How do **you** describe St. Philip to a friend or church visitor?

While serving as a Sunday “greeter” this past week, I was asked by a first-time visitor to tell her about our church. I was caught a little off guard and had not prepared an “elevator” response. I finally said, “For me, St. Philip feels like *home*, like a *safe place* . . . a place that welcomes and comforts and celebrates everyone who comes through the doors.” I went on to tell her that my husband, John, and I had found St. Philip shortly after experiencing a very painful ‘church split’ at our former church of 44 years. We were feeling like wounded and betrayed warriors. God provided a healing balm for us here. We have since learned so much more about St. Philip, and our appreciation and gratitude for God's providence increases daily. We've learned this is a very generous and loving church that shows God's love to the world in so many ways.

I went on to tell her how much we've been personally blessed by volunteering with the “*Lord of the Streets*” in serving breakfast to the homeless and how much fun we have in the Sewing group as we quilt blankets for homeless children. I then told her that St. Philip is an “*Earth Care*” congregation, and about our Green Day Celebration activities, and our commitment to learn about and take care of the beautiful world God made for us. And, of course, I had to tell her about the Church & Society Sunday School Class and its emphasis on social justice and what that means for our church members.

I also told her that St. Philip is a “*More Light Presbyterian Church*” which means we support full participation of LGBTQIA+ people in the life, ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA). we're committed to *peacemaking* by engaging individually & collectively in peacemaking ministries. I describe *The Kids Against Hunger* program and the *tons of nutritious meals* we pack for impoverished children and families.

I raved about our magnificent ministers, our music program and our incredibly talented singers, musicians, organist, and leaders.

By this time she had missed the church service! (Just kidding). I do hope she'll come back . . . I have so much more to tell her about our church.

What I'm *really* trying to say is, **THANK YOU!** Thank **YOU** for supporting this church. Thank you for your annual pledges, donations, and your service. **YOU** enable this church to spread God's love, grace, and tangible help to so many in this world and to its members. Again, **THANK YOU.**

Judye Hartman
Co-chair, Stewardship Committee



Date	Name
1	Sally Alcorn
1	Mike Gabel
1	Joanna Munson
1	Walker Fair
1	Kate Dickinson-Varner
2	Amye Webster
2	Sarah Hannah
4	William Rowe
5	Selena Brinegar
5	Lindsey Koczenasz
5	Allyssa Lewis
7	Christian Davis
7	Abigail Lee
8	Carla Burns
8	Tyler Kever
9	Nolan Arnes
9	Gil Thompson
9	Piper Dees
10	John Boone
10	Lorraine Scott
11	Bev Hudson
12	Fairfax Fair
12	Ashton Fair
13	Connie Mayfield
13	Gene McKelvey
14	Laura Lomax-Bream
14	Micah Meyers
15	Barbara Runge
15	Angela Fulcher
16	Cindy Dees
16	Joan Boelens
17	Julieana Nichols-Lawson
18	Gary Gardner
19	Cindy Pope
19	Fort Flowers
19	Leah Bream
21	Melanie White
22	Bob McHone
22	Ev-ie Kever
23	Austin Lippincott
23	Sydney Benard
24	Martha Hargraves
25	Bill Lee
25	Lexey Fender
26	Ken Meyers
26	Sharon Coufal
26	Ann Davis
27	David Itz
29	Bill O'Dell
29	Abigail Flowers
31	Arlette Keene



Every One of Your Birthdays

Every one of your birthdays
is a gift to the rest of us
who have had the pleasure
of having you in our lives
for another year.

Every one of your birthdays
brings joyful memories
of your bright smile
and your love of life.

Every one of your birthdays
reminds us of your sensitivity
and service to others,
and other delights
too numerous to name
that we are gifted with
just by knowing you.

Happy Birthday
to one in a million.
May you, and we
enjoy many more.

By Joanna Fuchs

IN OUR PRAYERS

*Pam Keever and family upon the death of her father Travis Calboun on June 10, a memorial service will be live-streamed Saturday, June 19 at saintphilip.net.
Mary Sinderson and family upon the death of her sister Dixie Hahn who died on June 13.*

St. Philippians and their families—Dan Cleveland; Roderick James; Don Padgett; Dorothy Blackwell; Steve Adger; Judith Crane; Shirley Coffman; Ellen MacDonald; Arlette Keene; CJ Miller; Marion Takehara; Mezgebe Gebray; Ann Perkins Cloud—cousin of Stephen Paine; Douglas Everhart—brother of Nancy Everhart Johnson; Carol Paine Kendrick—sister of Stephen Paine; John Anderson—brother of Tom Anderson; Janet Fisher—sister-in-law of Dan Cleveland; Mac & Beverly Wilson—parents of Butch Wilson; Vera Moore—mother of Chuck Johnson; Kelsey Higgs Gallegos & family—daughter of Nancy Higgs; Dottie Laas and family—cousin of Sam Fisher; Alice Barron—sister-in-law to Beth Atkinson; Shirley Boggus—grandmother of Omi Ford; Dona Rowe—mother of William Rowe; and Elizabeth Carlton Lithio—granddaughter of Jeanie Flowers.

Homebound—Sue Baier; Walter Baker; John Bobbitt; Paulie Carlson; Kitty Curry; George Helland; Jean Nelson; Joyce Randolph; Mary Sinderson; George and Lorraine Scott; and Jody Tomforde.

Friends of St. Philippians—Emily de'Argao—friend of Jacquie Colton; Matt Scalapino and Laura Chilton—friends of Stephen Paine; Shirley Stubblefield—friend of Barbara Runge; Paul Ratliff—friend of Jo Helland; Rob Bond, Lavon Thomas, Bill McDonald and Jackson Tavel—friends of Curt and Sharon Webb; Clayton Amacker—friend of Peg Palisin and Gary Gardner; and Walter "Buddy" Hammann III—friend of Robin and Gary Willis.

We also pray for health care workers, first responders, and caregivers; for those who are sick; and for those watch and wait.

If you have a pastoral care need or a prayer request you would like to share, please email deacons@saintphilip.net.

Pledge payments, communion gifts and other gifts to support the Church can be made anytime through our website (<http://saintphilip.net/>), text "SPPC" to 73256 and follow the prompts, or sent to the Church Office at 4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056.

Next edition: July 6; Deadline [July 1—3:00 p.m.](#)

Stay connected with regular emails from the pastors until then.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the Philip-Eye, please send them to:
philipeye@saintphilip.net or call 713-622-4807 and ask for Lorrie.



MORE LIGHT
PRESBYTERIANS



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