



PHILIP-EYE

DAILY PRAYER SERVICE

"It felt great to sit in the Sanctuary during the prayer service and connect with the staff in person..." said Lee Ardell.

As we continue to assess and monitor coronavirus data and the recommendations of local health leaders and then filter that information through our particular context at St. Philip, we remain convinced that we should continue to gather only online for Sunday worship for the coming weeks. **However, we are now able to have a limited number of people attend in-person our 11:00 a.m. daily prayer service (Monday-Saturday).** We are



starting with a limit of five persons per day, beginning with Monday's service. Advanced registration is required. For more information on conditions and to register click [here](#). The link will change weekly and is only available in the daily emails from the pastors. We hope that the opportunity to again worship in the sacred space of our Sanctuary will be a source of comfort and hope. Depending on circumstances, we can expand the number of worshipers per day as we go forward. If you have trouble with the registration or are not online, please call Lorrie Castle (832-262-1244).

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.

Sunday Coffee Hour—Gather with fellow St. Philipians to talk about the sermons, hear about their week and what helped them get through the week. The Coffee Hour begins after the closing voluntary. Once we have a majority in the meeting, participants are sent to smaller breakout rooms so you have a more intimate group. The groups will randomly be assigned each week. Email Lorrie Castle at lorrie@saintphilip.net to be added to the list.

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

Rev. Keatan King
Associate Pastor

Rev. Omar Rouchon
Associate Pastor

Rev. Dr. Samuel Lanham III
Pastor Emeritus

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



A GA like no other

by Leslie Scanlon, *Outlook* national reporter



There is no question, the 2020 General Assembly will be unlike any the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has seen before.

It's being held during a stunning season in American life — the aching time when more than 100,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, when protesters fill the streets night after night to protest racial injustice and the police killing of George Floyd, when churches are trying to live into the new realities of worshipping online, when the world seems to tilt in a new direction almost every hour and who knows what will come next? Fittingly, the new theme of this assembly is "From Lament to Hope" — the implications of which seem to expand day by day.

Virtual GA. This will be the **first time a PC(USA) assembly has met virtually** — all online, a technological challenge both for organizers and commissioners, something that many Presbyterians a generation ago probably never could have imagined. The assembly had been scheduled to meet in Baltimore June 20-27, but the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) decided formally in April that, because of the need for social distancing, that couldn't happen.

New business? This assembly will be much shorter than usual (with plenary sessions streamed online on June 19, 26 and 27) and the agenda will be abbreviated. COGA's recommendation is to include only business considered "**critical and core**," and to refer everything else to the General Assembly two years from now (although commissioners could try to alter that when the

docket comes up for a vote June 19, if they feel there's particular business — such as action on social justice — that just can't wait).

There's a lot on the list to be referred to the General Assembly in 2022 — including PC(USA) policy on climate change, gun violence, financial sustainability, racial injustice, international concerns and much more — and there's been pushback from some Presbyterian groups to add more business to the docket this year, although time will be tight.

Here's another possibility. Once the assembly convenes, a commissioner could move to suspend the rules to introduce new business. Such a motion would need a two-thirds vote to prevail — but if enough commissioners feel the PC(USA) needs to speak or act, to offer the assembly's public witness on the COVID-19 pandemic or George Floyd's killing or the systemic inequities driving the protests in the streets, that could happen.

Leadership. Much of the "critical and core" business on which the assembly will be asked to vote is not particularly controversial. It includes, for example, confirmation of the election of leaders of PC(USA) agencies and changes in standing rules.

The assembly also will make decisions about leadership, including deciding **whether to elect J. Herbert Nelson for a second four-year term** as the denomination's stated clerk — the public face and chief ecclesiastical officer of the PC(USA) — and choosing among **three teams of candidates who are standing to serve as co-moderators** of this assembly.

Friday, June 19th

7:00 pm	Plenary 1 Standing Rules Docket and Business Co-Moderator Report
9:00 pm	Moderator Election

All times are EDT.

Friday, June 26th

11:00 am	Opening Worship
12:00 pm	Recess
1:00 pm	Plenary 2 Consent Agenda Critical Business Budget Orientation
3:00 pm	Recess
4:00 pm	Plenary 3 Critical Business
6:00 pm	Recess

Saturday, June 27th

11:00 am	Plenary 4 Stated Clerk Election Critical Business
1:00 pm	Recess
2:00 pm	Plenary 5 Critical Business
3:30 pm	Recess
4:30 pm	Plenary 6 Remaining Business Meditation and Music
6:30 pm	Adjourn

Money. The commissioners also will vote on budgets — budgets that reflect the financial pain of the PC(USA) and the struggles of small churches to survive. A COVID-19 Financial Team is projecting **income declines across the denomination** of about 25% in 2020 and 2021, and the budgets this assembly will be asked to approve have been scaled back from earlier proposals to reflect that.

The proposed General Assembly per capita rate is \$8.95 per member in both 2021 and 2022 — the same as it has been in 2019 and 2020. “An increase to the apportionment rate for 2021 is not politically, or economically, feasible,” a report from the COVID-19 Financial Team states.

Worship and action. The assembly also will include a worship service on June 26 in which Nelson will speak theologically about lament, injustice and hope. Presbyterians are invited to participate online in a series of events — including the **Poor People’s Campaign Assembly & Moral March on Washington** (being held digitally at 10 a.m. EDT June 20); a Youth Rising event featuring young entrepreneurs of color from Baltimore (at 3 p.m. EDT June 23); and Bible study led by James Elisha Taneti and Mary Florence Taneti, focusing on Lamentations 5:20-21 (in two identical 45-minute sessions, at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. EDT June 24). The offering being taken during opening worship will go to support Youth Rising.

One benefit of a virtual General Assembly: Anyone with internet access can watch online, free

of charge and without registering, either on the **GA224 website** or the **Spirit of GA** Facebook page. All business items coming to the assembly can be found at **pc-biz.org**.

The exact order of business during the June 26 and 27 plenaries is still to be determined, but here’s the **outline of the docket** (see above, all times are EDT).

New ways. Among the unknowns are how well all this will work and what glitches – technological or otherwise – might emerge, such as how commissioners discern together if they’ve never met in person and can’t spend those extra minutes gathered in small groups to get to know one another, talk through a complicated proposal or to pray together.

Some are mourning the lack of in-person connection and also that visceral sense an assembly provides of being part of a broader connectional church.

This may, however, be the start of a new practice for the PC(USA) — one that’s certainly less expensive and perhaps more flexible. “We are talking about a major transformation in assemblies going forward,” Nelson has said. And also: “I don’t think we’re ever going to be the same church again.”

During General Assembly, stay up to date by visiting **pres-outlook.org/GA224** for assembly coverage, follow us on Twitter at **@presoutlook** and like us on Facebook to stay connected with what’s happening at GA.

SEAFARERS TURN TABLES ON A CHAPLAIN

Our Presbyterian port chaplains are well known for their ability to offer assistance and to bring God's love to seafarers aboard ships calling on the Port of Houston. The following is a copy of a recent Facebook post by chaplain David Wells:

"I owe great thanks to Seafarers I have met. With COVID-19, everyone is under great stress. I am aware that it is so easy to transfer that stress inappropriately to others. Seafarers have blessed me this week and done just the opposite. Six different persons have communicated to me and 4 of them were in other countries and I have not seen them for over 1 year. Yet, they contacted me just to ask how I was doing with the COVID-19. I have never felt so blessed and peaceful through such an act of love and kindness—God bless you and I will never forget you. In fact, 4 of these seafarers are Buddhist that makes their acts even more special to me. I am reminded of this Bible verse:

John 16:32-33 English Standard Version (ESV).

32 Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world!"

Our seafarer chaplains continue to visit arriving ships during the pandemic via "gangway ministry," limiting their on board visits to the gangway area to protect ship crews who are vulnerable to infection due to close living and working conditions aboard ship. The Seafarers Ministry is a mission/outreach partner of St. Philip.

MONTREAT WORSHIP & MUSIC CONFERENCE IS HAPPENING VIRTUALLY!

June 21-26—So much has had to be cancelled the past few months, and this is a great opportunity to do something rich, fun, and meaningful.

<https://www.presbysmusic.org/2020conference>

- ♪ Inspiring and Spirit-filled Worship services
- ♪ The Routley Lecture Series – featuring 2020 Routley Lecturer, Mel Bringle
- ♪ Masterclasses with top-tier choral and handbell clinicians
- ♪ Worship reflections focused on bringing new ideas to your congregations
- ♪ Concerts each day featuring talented and gifted church musicians from across the country, including the Organ Recital and Hymn Festival!
- ♪ Creative Art Workshops inspiring imaginative designs for amplifying worship

Special moments direct from Montreat's campus – including the Huckleberry Café, Lake Susan, and atop Lookout Mountain! Registration will be open until the week of the conference!

Visit the [Children's Page](#) on the St. Philip website. This a place that intends to help keep families connected to the church during this time of distance and separation. Be on the lookout for brief worship videos from Omar in the children's chapel and resources for faith formation at home. There are links to Godly Play stories, prayers and sharing activities to do around the dinner table. You can access the Children's Page using the icon on the home page of the church site.

WHO'S ZOOMING WHOM? (CONTD)

Church & Society: June 21 - The Effect of the Corona Virus on Our Medical Practice - Two of our St. Philipians discuss their perspective on the effects of the pandemic in relation to their service in pediatric and psychiatric medical practice. Join us to learn from a doctor's perspective how this crisis affects patients as they seek help from the medical community. Presented by Juliana Nichols, MD - Associate Professor for Pediatrics-Academic General and Director of the Academic Pediatric Fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine and by James W. Lomax, MD - professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Baylor College of Medicine with professional interests in Psychoanalytic Treatment - Interface Between Religion - Spirituality, and Healing- **June 28** - Serving the Homeless Community in the Midst of a Pandemic - In this session we will learn how SEARCH - "For a Houston without homelessness" and House of Tiny Treasures is navigating the unprecedented challenges presented by the Corona Virus outbreak. SEARCH is a St. Philip Mission Partner and the St. Philip Stitches lovingly create quilts for House of Tiny Treasures - Houston's first nationally accredited early childhood development center dedicated to serving homeless children and families. Presented by Alexis Loving, Vice President of Programs at SEARCH Homeless Services. These presentations are available through the conferencing Software Zoom: Sundays at 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. The June 28 class will conclude the Church & Society presentations. We'll meet again on Rally Day, **Sept. 13**, for a class reunion and a preview of the fall C & S presentations. If you would like to partake in the Church and Society Zoom class, please email Mickey Meyers at mmcgm63@gmail.com.

Women's Monthly Book Club—This self-led, interactive group produces lively discussions and wonderful fellowship. Our next meeting is July 9 at 7 p.m. We will discuss *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles led by Janet Hess. Contact Sarah O'Dell for Zoom link – sarah.odell6@gmail.com.

Midweek Bible Study with John Wurster—A look at the Bible readings for the coming Sunday. Email John for details and to get on the list - john@saintphilip.net

IN OUR PRAYERS

Susan Estill and family upon the death of her brother-in-law Keith Thomerson on June 4 in Louisville, KY.

St. Philippians and their families— Travis Calhoun; Jeanne West; Guy Aldrich; Greg Moore; Marion Takehara; CJ Miller; Lonnie Fugit; Mezgebe Gebray; Dottie Laas and family—cousin of Sam Fisher; Alice Barron—sister-in-law to Beth Atkinson; Nikolaus Malczewskyj—father-in-law of Jane Malczewskyj; David Block—brother-in-law of Nancy Lomax; John Beck—brother of Nancy Young; Margie Foster—mother of Mark Young; Tom Martin—father of Jon Martin; Dorothy McMillan—mother of Nancy Higgs; ; Barbara Wilson—sister-in-law of Connie Mayfield; Jack Kindig—brother of Ginny Camfield; Shirley and Weldon Boggus, Sr.—grandparents of Omi Ford; Jimmy Reagan—father of Sarah O'Dell; Dona Rowe—mother of William Rowe; Elizabeth Carlton Lithio—granddaughter of Jeanie Flowers; and Ann Morgan—sister of Dorothy Blackwell.

Homebound: Sue Baier; Walter Baker; Joe Anne Berwick; John Bobbitt; Paulie Carlson; Kitty Curry; Jane English; Barbara German; George Helland; Donna Host; Arlette Keene; T.E. "Joe" Keever; Toto McGehee; Phillip McDaniel; Paul & Alice Pennington; Joyce Randolph; Van Rathgeber; Jean Nelson; Jody Tomforde; Penny Vieau; and Ruth Weber.

Friends of St. Philippians: Craig and Jamie Slein—friends of Steve Carmichael; Melissa and Sela Calvert—friends of Kay Cash; Dorcas Rhodes—friend of Jan Meyer; Dave Olson and Clayton Amacker—friends of Peg Palisin and Gary Gardner; Shirley Stubblefield—friend of Barbara Runge; Frank Wallace—friend of Jim & Nadene Crain; and Walter "Buddy" Hammann III—friend of Robin & 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.

Congratulations to Virginia Waldrop—make that DOCTOR Virginia Waldrop—a member of the Dell Medical School Class of 2020 at the University of Texas, Austin, which is also the inaugural graduating class. Dell opened its doors four years ago, and Virginia was in the first class. She will now begin a residency in Internal Medicine—Primary Care at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. We are proud of you, Virginia!

On behalf of the congregation I would like to say a big "Thank You" to the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), who brought us our most beloved pastor John Wurster. I am sure that you will all agree that John's leadership in these most trying times has been divinely inspired. As a former chairman of a PNC, I know the hard work that goes into the calling of a new pastor. The congregation thanks you all for your hard work and dedication and would continue to keep you in our prayers.

Thanks for an excellent job!

Roderick V. James PhD.



Ahmed, 5-yr-old son of our Iraqi refugee family now living in Midland, TX, is a proud kindergarten graduate. Our church continues to be of assistance to this family.
Congratulations, Ahmed!

Next edition: July 7

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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