

PHILIP-EYE

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PHILIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH U.S.A.

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STAY CONNECTED!

Houston, Texas

April 5, 2016

WELCOME NEW MEMBER: HEATHER YOUNG HIGHSMITH

Heather has just joined our congregation, and is transferring from St. Marks Episcopal Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. She grew up in Russellville, Arkansas, and attended Hendrix College. She also met her husband Cameron in Arkansas. Cameron is Director of Spiritual Care for Prayers of the People (POP) and a candidate for ordination as a teaching elder. Heather currently works as a Fellow in Pediatric Infectious Diseases. In her spare time, she likes to relax by cooking, reading and just hanging out.

Heather was invited to St. Philip by friends Liz Branch, Carlos Lopez, and Sally Johnson. She decided to join St. Philip due to our worship service, welcoming congregation, and our ministerial staff. She indicates interest in many facets of congregational life, including Youth Program, Worship, Missions, Welcoming and Membership, Fellowship and Caring, and Peacemaking and Social Justice. Please welcome Heather to our congregation.



For over 53 years, Houston Boychoir has been building men of character. As is one of the country's premiere boychoirs, it sets the level of excellence for artistic achievement and educational outcomes in children's performing ensembles. The boys perform extensively each season throughout the city, across the country and around the world, delighting audiences and building friendships. They will perform **April 10** in the Sanctuary at 4:00 p.m. The three choirs will cover a wide variety of music spanning the centuries. From Mozart, to folk music to Harold Arlen, something for everyone. Houston Boychoir, "it is an experience you won't want to miss."

WE CHOOSE WELCOME!

Guided by three St. Philip sessions which have committed to the peacemaking program of the PCUSA and by our Session's resolution affirming St. Philip's commitment to "welcome the stranger," the Peacemaking & Social Justice Committee embarks on a "We Choose Welcome" emphasis. What does this mean? One concern is the plight of 11 million Syrians who have been displaced from their homes due to years of conflict and instability. Presbyterians have had a mission presence in Syria since the early 1800s. Honoring that heritage we today join with other congregations in the U.S. who hold the people of Syria and the Syrian refugees in their prayers. We Choose Welcome!

Submitted by the Peacemaking & Social Justice Committee

Dear Friends:

The wedding of Keatan King and Nate Carlin this past weekend in Austin was joyful and inspiring. University Presbyterian Church was the site for the ceremony. This is Keatan's home church and is a glorious setting for worship. As often happens when ministers marry, Keatan and Nate chose the "long form" service of Christian marriage. There were two congregational hymns, two anthems from the UPC choir, and a celebration of the Lord's Supper. The couple spoke their declarations of intent around the large baptismal font, linking the covenant of marriage to the promise of God proclaimed in baptism. The officiating ministers were John Alsup, emeritus professor of New Testament at Austin Seminary and Keatan's "godfather" (or as close to the term as is possible in the Presbyterian Church); and Robert Dykstra, professor of pastoral theology at Princeton Seminary, who is known to us at St. Philip as our 2015 Summer Lecturer and who preached at Nate's ordination service at St. Philip in August of 2013.

In his wedding sermon, Dr. Dykstra spoke about the role of the community in assisting a couple in their life together. The totality of the wedding vows, the commitment to one another in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, requires a level of devotion that we fallible creatures are incapable of on our own. However, through God's grace and through the supportive love of family, friends, and sisters and brothers in faith we are strengthened to live into the vows we make when we marry. The marriage service itself includes an Affirmation of the Community, asking if all those witnessing the vows will do everything in their power to uphold the couple in their marriage. Those gathered Saturday answered the question with an enthusiastic "We will." I felt confident answering that question on behalf of the St. Philip community, trusting that we all will do what we can to support and strengthen Keatan and Nate in the vows they have made to one another.

It's not just in marriage that the community plays a significant role. It is that way for the whole of faith. It's hard to follow Jesus Christ alone. Rather, we need the support, the guidance, and the companionship of one another. Accordingly, when we baptize children, the whole congregation makes a promise of nurture and support. When we ordain and install elders and deacons, we lay on hands, signifying the Body of Christ that extends through the generations. At our service of healing and wholeness, we gather around those seeking healing in a way that represents the blessing that comes through sharing life together. These are just a few examples of how we bear witness to the value of our common life.

In the doctrine of the Trinity, we posit that God exists as "one God in three persons." In other words, God is fundamentally a "being in relationship;" and so community is at the core of who God is. As God's people, we are called into relationship with one another, and it is through our relationships that we grow into the fullness of who God would have us be. Being together for worship, for learning, for service, and for fellowship are crucial for developing and sustaining our faith. We need each other, and we have a responsibility to one another.

With thanksgiving for all the blessings of our life together, let us pray for Keatan and Nate as they begin their marriage; and let us also pray for one another as the community of St. Philip.

Faithfully yours,



Recuperating at Home

Sue Baier	Malcolm Host
Rusty Howard	Jo Jones
Virginia McFarland	Penny Vieau
Paul Pennington	Ruth Weber
Bedford Vestal	Jan Conner

IN OUR PRAYERS

Barney Haley—Lorrie Castle's uncle hospitalized at Tampa General for MRSA
 Gary Gardner managing severe pain
 Candace Demary's parents, the Bourques: Peggy is coping with health issues & Wayne has been moved to hospice care in Louisiana
 T.E. Keever—Hallmark Healthcare Center
 Shirley Smith—friend of Mary Ann Thomas coping with debilitating health issues
 Lorraine Lyter-Reed's brothers: Martin is re-covering from below-the-knee amputation; Leland – ongoing cancer treatment
 Mike Tomforde, Jr.—Hallmark HC Larry Dean—Seven Acres
 Pat Clark—treatment at MD Anderson
 Joe Anne Berwick—residing at Belmont

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL

Nursery and Preschool

Infants and children through three years old

8:30 am to 12:30pm - Room 106

Staffed by professional childcare providers

Age 3 through Kindergarten

Godly Play Class - Room 104

Elementary

Grades 1,2, and 3 meet in Room 105

Grades 4 and 5 meet in Room 103

Middle School

Grades 6-8 meet in Room 206

High School

Grades 9-12 meet in Room 205

Jubilate with Children's Music Associate

1st through 5th grades 9:30 am – 10:00 am

in Room 105 with Alicia Chew

ADULT CLASSES

SPa CLASS - Room 200

The SPa (Saint Philip Adults) class is a fellowship of adults from all walks of life who gather for learning and community. Our discussion-based class meets each Sunday morning; we use the material from the well-regarded "Thoughtful Christian" series. Topics are timely and relevant. Please visit www.thethoughtfulchristian.com for more details.

BIBLE STUDY - Room 204

The class is engaged in a study of the book of **1 Samuel** which tells of the rise of the kingdom of Israel and the eventual rise of **David** as their leader, revealing throughout the very human traits of the people involved in the narrative. The Bible study class utilizes the insights of a variety of scholars to expand our understanding of God's message of faithfulness to His people. Nancy Cook and Al Waldrop lead the discussions. All are welcome.

CHURCH & SOCIETY - Room 201 -

April 10—*Crisis in Christianity - the American Civil War* presented by Dr. Eugene Boisabuin, Distinguished Teaching Professor of Medicine, McGovern Medical School, University of Texas - Health Science Center. **April 17**—*Poverty in Houston and the Response Through Christian Community Service Center* presented by Michelle Shonbeck, Executive Director of CCSC. **April 24**—*Peace Beyond Understanding* presented by Ruling Elder Hill Kemp, First Presbyterian Church, Jasper, TX and president of the board of Peace Beyond Understanding.

PRESBYTERIAN 101 COMING APRIL 17

Presbyterian 101 is a four-week series of classes about the distinctive marks of Presbyterian faith and practice. Led by John Wurster, these sessions will explore the history, theological emphases, worship features, and governing characteristics that define this part of the Christian family. New members, prospective members, seekers, wonderers, and everyone else is welcome. The first class is **April 17** at 9:30 in Room 202.

WEEKDAY STUDIES

MONDAY EVENING STUDY GROUP

We meet each second and fourth Monday, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., in the dining room (in the administration building, at the south end of campus). Besides conversation, our meetings include light food and drink, fellowship, and a brief prayer.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Bible study with John Wurster continues with a focus on the Gospel of John. While containing some of the most familiar passages in the whole Bible, John also offers a distinctive, often complex, presentation of Jesus. The class meets weekly in the dining room, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Weekly Fellowship meets every Friday in the Conference Room at 12:00 pm. They have selected *Words Made Flesh* by J. Pittman McGehee. Robert Estill has copies of the book available for \$15. Those men who wish to participate should bring a bag lunch; refreshments will be provided. All men welcome. The group wraps up promptly at 1:00 pm.

MONTHLY BOOK GROUP

A monthly interest group for women who like to read books, socialize, and have a night out meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at a member's home. At our next meeting, **April 14**, we will have our social gathering at an area restaurant. Check your email for details. This self-led, interactive group produces lively discussions and wonderful fellowship. For more information go to: <http://saintphilip.net/BookGroup.html>



Are you Presby Pro (Presbyterian Proficient)?

Test your knowledge about Presbyterian history, symbols, practices, and more.

1. What is the role of the Clerk of Session, and who holds this position at St. Philip?
2. Presbyterians are distinctive in two major ways; what are they?



FRIDAY PHIL-UP!

Join us for Friday Phil-Up! We'll meet at Beck's Prime (located in the Memorial Park Golf Course, 1001 E Memorial Loop Dr.) on Friday, **April 15th** at 6:30 pm for food, fun, and fellowship. A great way to unwind at the end of your work week! Beck's is a kid-friendly location, and all ages are welcome. We hope that you will join us!

2016 *Presbyterian Women* **BIRTHDAY OFFERING**

LET *Justice*
ROLL DOWN

like waters,
and righteousness like
an ever-flowing stream. —Amos 5:24*

Heartland 180

Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley

Direct Action and Research Training Center

Building Minds in South Sudan



2016 BIRTHDAY OFFERING PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

You are invited to join us Sunday, **April 10** after worship. Cake and punch will be served in the Gathering Area.

SAVE THE DATE: PW SPRING GATHERING - APR. 16

Presbyterian Women (PW) of New Covenant and of Atascocita Presbyterian Church invite ALL WOMEN to the Spring Gathering on **Sat., Apr. 16** at **9:30 a.m.** at Atascocita Presbyterian Church (19426 Atasca Oaks Dr, Humble, TX 77346). Details about mission opportunities, schedule, registration, meals, and child care can be found on the [Presbytery's website](#).



**THE PRIMETIMERS:
TO INFINITY AND BEYOND!**

On Tuesday, **April 26**, the PrimeTimers will have their next voyage, taking them to Space Center Houston. The bus will leave from St. Philip at 9AM and will return by 3:00. The visit will include a tram tour to NASA’s Johnson Space Center, and access to the new Independence Plaza (featuring a replica of a space shuttle and the actual NASA 905 shuttle carrier aircraft) as well as the interactive Starship Galleria. The group will meet to enjoy lunch in the Zero-G diner before heading back to the church. Please be aware that there will be no private group tour, and lots of outdoor walking will be involved. Please wear comfortable walking shoes and shades. The trip will cost \$20, including lunch. Please sign up by Sunday, **April 17**, by calling the church office. The trip will be limited to 30 people. Please contact Omar Rouchon with any questions.



Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will conduct a public hearing on April 12 at TxDOT Houston District Office Auditorium located at 7600 Washington, 77007. The purpose of the hearing is to present a proposed dedicated bus lane on 610 from I-10 (Northwest Transit Center) to Post Oak Blvd. and to receive public comments. Displays will be available for viewing at 5:30 p.m. with the formal hearing commencing at 6:30 p.m. More information is available at the church office from Lorrie Castle or go to:

<http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings/houston/041216.html>



Come to the “table of sustainable farming” on Sunday, **April 24**, where we will have fairly traded coffees, teas, chocolate, almonds and olive oil on offer before and after the 11 am worship service.

Our “Equal Exchange- Presbyterian Coffee Project” is an aspect of our call to peace-making and working for social justice as Christians . We strive to live a life integrating the gospel teachings into the actions and decisions of our lives.

As a congregation of believers we have made the conscious decision to support Equal Exchange Fair Trade through our purchases as a congregation and as individuals. We advocate for fairer trade as a model for a global economy rooted in people-to-people connections, justice and sustainability. A system of exchange that promotes economic justice, reduces global poverty, and honors and protects the environment. Join us on Earth Day in the Gathering Area to make your commitment to this ministry thru your purchases **and pick up a packet of seeds to grow in your own garden!**

FREEMAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Mark and Velma Freeman Scholarship Fund annually provides scholarship assistance to St. Philip students attending college or graduate school. The application form is now available on the church website or by contacting the church office. All application materials need to be returned to the church by **May 1**.

<http://saintphilip.net/SubmitForms.html>

ARTS & CRAFT STUDIO

The next scheduled Saturday craft is **May 7** from 12 p.m. till 6 p.m. RSVP to Lorrie. Bring a snack to share with everyone. Have any type of craft project that you would like to work on and just need the company? Come join us! Contact lorrie@saintphilip.net or 832-262-1244.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Financial Update as of 2/29/2016

Total Revenue	\$211,010
Total Expenses	\$212,892
Pledges collected	\$147,633
Budget YTD	\$164,500



Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
invites you to
Paint the World you want to see

April 21, 2016
Noon to 1:00
Junior League of Houston
1811 Briar Oaks Ln
Houston, TX 77027

Please RSVP to **Mary Sinderson • maryls55@yahoo.com • 713-830-5447**



The Lindsay family wishes to thank everyone who helped put together Margaret Lindsay's memorial service. We especially wish to thank John Wurster, Matthew Dirst and Jason Neuring for the meaningful worship service, Lorrie Castle for coordinating everything, and Mary Benson, Jenilee Simmons and the Presbyterian women for the elegant reception following the service. We know Margaret would have been very pleased with the Scottish touch. We also want to thank everyone at St. Philip for their thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.



Faith & Grief Ministries (FGM) is deeply grateful for the generous grant from the St. Philip Presbyterian Church Central Mission Endowment. The grant was awarded to promote awareness of "*Comfort & Hope on the Journey of Grief*," a weekend retreat, facilitated for a second year by FGM at the invitation of Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly and to greatly reduce the registration fee so that finances would not be an obstacle to the healing process.

Five men and forty-two women participated in the weekend retreat. None of them *wanted* to be there. What they wanted was to enjoy life as it was before the death of their loved ones. One woman, grieving the death of her only son at 13 and her husband who died several months later, admitted that she had a quick exit plan in place because she feared being surrounded by persons who felt sorry for themselves. What she discovered was a room full of *others with such courage, strength, and love*.

Courage led participants, from ages 24-86, to travel from Ohio, Florida, and points across Texas to seek comfort in their sorrow. A widower reflected, *there is comfort in looking around this room and realizing that I am not alone in my grief*. And the person sitting next to him said, *having my feelings validated takes away much of the fear of grief*.

The weekend was filled with:

- hearing others tell their stories of grief
- sharing personal experiences
- learning spiritual disciplines that promote comfort
- enjoying the beauty of Mo in silence, laughter, and tears
- listening to passages of scripture from the Paschal triduum, Job, Ruth, II Samuel, and the Gospel of John

One participant commented, *With each scripture story, our differences found common ground* and compassion became a healing balm of strength. After hearing anew the story of Jesus weeping after the death of his friend, Lazarus, a participant, grieving the death of a friend of 50+ years, said *people don't recognize the pain and loss that comes with the death of a best friend*. Six participants found unexpected hope and a distillation of the stigma surrounding suicide loss survivors by sitting together at a table facilitated by a 10-year survivor.

Many participants did not know what to expect from the retreat because it was their first experience with the death of a sibling, spouse, parent, or child. Others hoped to: *gain something powerful; find out I'm not going crazy; get relief from intense pain*. Jenny shared:

I felt the heart of God speaking through all of you, and healed so much more than I even anticipated. Faith and Grief Ministries provides something that has been missing in our culture and churches for too long-- a safe place to be vulnerable in grief. We all have so many tools now: so many different ways to pray, so many scriptural references to guide us, so many warm memories from the stories and support.

All participants said, *Yes! Absolutely!* they would encourage others to attend next year's workshop, **February 24-26, 2017**.

MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

Creating Communities of Grace and Hope



In every congregation there are people and families who struggle with mental health issues – some chronic, some more acute. In every case the community of faith is called upon to respond with compassion, understanding, and hope. At this symposium, experts in the area of mental health will present information on causes, treatment, research, and resources, how to reach beyond the stigma, and how to minister to people with mental health issues. The keynote speaker will be Elizabeth McIngvale-Cegelski, Ph.D., who is the founder of the Peace of Mind Foundation. Panelists include James Lomax, M.D., Matt Stanford, Ph.D., Sylvia Muzquiz-Drummond, M.D. and Rev. Dr. Peter Holmes.

All members and clergy of New Covenant Presbytery and any faith organization or church are invited to attend. This free symposium will be on Saturday, **April 23** from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (5308 Buffalo Speedway, Houston, TX 77005). The Committee of Congregational Resources of the Presbytery of New Covenant is sponsoring this event and more information is available from Charlotte Kibler at 281-744-0171 orcharwk@juno.com

The event is free: we ask that you register at: www.pbyofnewcovenant.org



The following is an excerpt from a letter Paula Paust, Executive Director of The Women's Home, and Marcia Tapp, Director of Resource Development, wrote St. Philip.

"Just down the street, a woman's life is better because you cared. The encouragement and support you have demonstrated will make a difference..We are so grateful for your investment to our operation, which has been allocated to our WholeLifeR program. Your gift will help us reach out to our residents who are struggling to build a whole life, leaving behind crisis and chaos."

EASTER BOXES FOR THE WOMEN’S HOME

Many, many thanks for your over the top number of items for the boxes. Every year your overwhelming, generous support for this project is beautiful. Because of your gifts, we were able to deliver 55 full boxes, plus more than usual bags of loose items. The women are thrilled to get them and appreciate everything. *Kindly, Janet Davis*



1. The clerk shall record the transactions of the session, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registers, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by another council of the church. John Lemen is our Clerk of Session.
2. They adhere to a pattern of religious thought known as Reformed theology and a form of government that stresses the active, representational leadership of both ministers and church members.

Session Highlights

March 15, 2016

- Session approved the Christian Education Committee proposal to purchase 5 units (art, drama, games, music/worship, and science) of the PC(USA) We Believe Workshop Curriculum – Jesus’ Big Words to use for Summer VBS.
- Session approved the Mission Committee proposed 2016 Mission Budget allocation on the next page.
- Session approved the following Mission Committee proposed 2016 Communion Offering Recipients:

Date	Offering Recipient
April 3	Bering/Omega
May 1	CCSC Back to School Program
May 15	PCUSA Pentecost Offering – 40% local churches can allocate to an agency that develops or supports programs for at-risk children, youth and young adults in our community. The committee recommends that 40% of the receipts from this offering go to PCHAS.
June 5	Bethesda Clinic, Mexico
July 3	House of Tiny Treasures
August 7	Interface-Samaritan
September 4	Good Neighbor Healthcare Center
November/December	The Mission Committee will choose the recipients for these offerings later for Session approval.
Session had already approved:	
January 3	Living Waters
February 7	Les and Cindy Morgan
March	One Great Hour of Sharing

- Session authorized a change to the Manual of Operations setting the number of ruling elders on the Personnel Committee to a minimum of six and permitting additional members who are not ruling elders to be added at the discretion of the committee.

Committee Actions:

- The Fellowship Committee has approved finalized plans for a Skeeters game, on Saturday, **June 25th**, and will purchase 20 tickets to start (\$19 each and include a hot dog, chips, and a drink).

Mission Budget 2016	Total to Mission Partners - 2013	2014 Actual	2015 Actual	Committee 2016 Proposed
Allocated to Presbytery of New Covenant	45,000	35,000	45,000	60,000
Allocated to Benevolences	124,000	74,500	102,768	147,894
Total Allocated	\$169,000	\$ 109,500	\$ 147,768	\$ 207,894
% to Presbytery	27%	32%	30%	29%
Amazing Place	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,000	4,000	5,000
Austin College	5,000		2,500	3,000
Austin Theological Seminary	5,000	2,000	5,000	5,000
Bering/Omega House	1,000	500	1,000	2,000
Bethesda Clinic - Nurse's Aid Fund	5,000	2,000	2,500	3,000
CanCare	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
CCSC	8,000	7,000	8,000	10,000
Good Neighbor HC Center	5,000	3,000	5,000	5,000
Good Shepherd - D. R. Congo	5,000	2,000	2,000	3,000
House of Tiny Treasures				500
IMA				2,000
Interface Samaritan	7,000	7,000	7,000	10,000
Interfaith Ministries	6,000	5,000	7,000	10,000
Kid's Meals	3,000	3,000	4,000	5,000
Kids Against Hunger	5,000	6,000	1,000	2,000
Living Waters	5,000	5,000	6,000	8,000
Lord of the Streets	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,600
Medical Benevolence Foundation	2,000	2,000	5,000	8,000
Mexico Mission Bethesda Clinic	2,000	1,000	2,000	3,000
Minister's Discretionary Fund	5,000	2,000	-	3,000
Mo Ranch (capital fund)	5,000			
Mo Ranch (operations)	2,000	2,000	2,000	4,000
Montreat			500	1,000
Morgans for Bangladesh	3,000	2,000	4,000	4,000
Pan American School	3,000	2,000	4,000	5,000
POP (Prayers of the People)	2,000	2,000	2,000	3,000
Presbyterian Children's H&S	4,000	3,000	6,000	9,000
Project C.U.R.E.				2,000
Quilters Piecemaking Project			200	200
Schreiner University	3,000			
Seafarer's International	2,500	2,500	5,000	10,000
SEARCH	3,000	2,500	4,000	4,000
The Beacon			2,000	4,000
The Women's Home	2,000	2,000	3,000	5,000
Theological Education Fund	1,500	1,000	1,000	2,000
Unexpected Needs - Mission Commission	6,000	1,000	2,068	594
United Campus Ministries	2,000	2,000	3,000	4,000
TOTALS	114,000	74,500	102,768	147,894