



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 22, 2024

Preparation for Worship

*Just as a mother feels the child grow in her and is not surprised on the day of the birth,
but joyfully receives the one she learned to know during her waiting,
so Jesus can be born in my life slowly and steadily
and be received as the one I learned to know while waiting.*

– Henri Nouwen

Voluntary

Partita on "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen"

Anton Heiler
(1923-1979)

Greeting

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Introit

Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates (excerpt)

William Mathias
(1934-1992)

Lift up your heads, O ye mighty gates;
And be ye lift up ye everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall come in.

- Psalm 24:7-10

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

✠ Hymn 82

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL

✦ Prayer of Confession

Patient God,
 We hear the voice of the prophet Micah,
 proclaiming the arrival of our Messiah.
 But we listen with tolerance to the lies of oppressors.
 We hear the song of Mary,
 lauding the lowly and humble.
 But we listen to a culture that values pride, possessions, and power.
 We hear the eternal promise of your gospel,
 proclaiming the salvation of the world.
 But we listen to the endless news cycle reporting the desolation of the world.

Open our ears, O Gracious God,
 to listen with reverence to your Word.
 Forgive our skepticism
 and soften our hearts to the promises of your kingdom
 until our ears hear and our hearts trust your gospel alone.

silent prayer

✦ Response *(sing 3 times)*

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

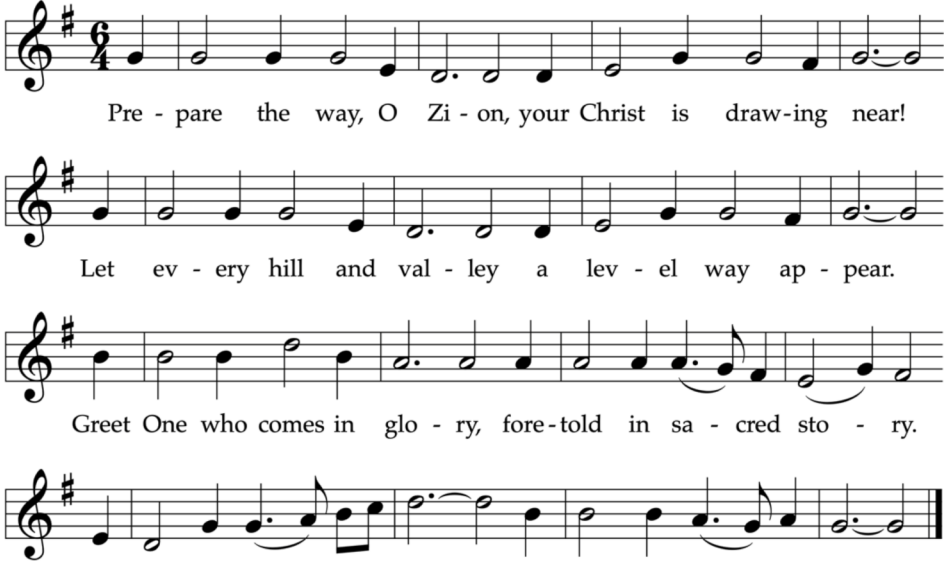
TEXT Ref. Taizé Community, 1984
 MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1984
 Text and Music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

WAIT FOR THE LORD
 8.8

✦ Declaration of Forgiveness

Believe the Good News. **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

✠ Response



Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!

Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.

Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.

O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; translated by Augustus Nelson, 1958;
 adapted by Charles P. Price, 1980, alt. © 1982 Hope Publishing Company
 MUSIC: *Then Swenska Psalmboken*, 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal*, 1930

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN
 7.6.7.6.7.7.6.6

✠ The Peace

Peace be with you. **Peace be with all.**

Conversation with Children

Infants - Age 4 may go to the Nursery in Room 106.

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

O.T. pg. 865

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

Magnificat in G Major

Charles Villiers Stanford
 (1852-1924)

My soul doth magnify the Lord
 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.
 For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden,
 For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For He that is mighty hath magnified me:
 And Holy is His Name.

And His mercy is on them that fear Him, throughout the generations.
 He hath shrewd strength with His arm,
 He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,
 He hath put down the mighty from their seat,

And hath exalted the humble and meek.
 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich
 He hath sent empty away,
 He, remembering His mercy, hath holpen his servant Israel.
 As He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed forever.
 He promised forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
 As it was from the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
 Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

N.T. pg. 57

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Snow Globe Gospel

Keatan King

silence and stillness

✦ Hymn 100

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

✦ Affirmation of Faith

from the Abbey of Iona

We believe that God is present
 in the darkness before dawn;
 in the waiting and uncertainty
 where fear and courage join hands,
 conflict and caring link arms,
 and the sun rises over barbed wire.
 We believe in a with-us God
 who sits down in our midst
 to share our humanity.
 We affirm a faith
 that takes us beyond the safe place:
 into action, into vulnerability
 and into the streets.
 We commit ourselves to work for change
 and put ourselves on the line;
 to bear responsibility, take risks,
 live powerfully and face humiliation;
 to stand with those on the edge;
 to choose life
 and be used by the Spirit
 for God's new community of hope. Amen.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be Thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
 for Thine is the Kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering**Offertory**

Pifa: "Pastoral Symphony"
from *Messiah*, HWV 56

G.F. Handel
(1685-1759)

✦ Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

O Lord our God, we give you thanks
for the hope and longing you instill in us through baptism.
**By the power of your Holy Spirit,
keep us awake and make us ready
for the coming of your glorious realm
of righteousness, justice, and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

✦ Hymn 84

Creator of the Stars of Night

CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM

✦ Charge and Blessing

Please be seated in silence for the closing voluntary, or kindly depart quietly.

Voluntary

Herr Christ, der einge Gottes-Sohn

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

SERVING TODAY**Pastors**

Keatan King | Omar Rouchon | John Wurster

Liturgist

Guy Aldrich

Musicians

Matthew Dirst, organist | St. Philip Choir | Julia Fox, soprano | Justin Langham, director of music

FLOWERS

The flowers today are given by Guy and Melissa Aldrich to the glory of God and in memory of Guy's father, G. Frank Aldrich, Jr.

WORSHIP NOTES

Advent Candle lighting is led this week by the college students of St. Philip.

Today's Lectionary readings:

- Micah 5:2-5a – *A ruler will come from Bethlehem; he will be the one of peace.*
- Luke 1:46b-55 – *My soul magnifies the Lord, who has done great things.*
- or Psalm 80:1-7 – *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel; let your face shine, and save us.*
- Hebrews 10:5-10 – *God does not desire burnt offerings; Christ came to do God's will.*
- Luke 1:39-45 (46-55) – *Mary visits Elizabeth; the child in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy.*

MUSIC NOTES

Austrian organist and harpsichordist Anton Heiller left a small but significant body of organ music, including a short partita on *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* ("Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"). Comprising three variations, the work presents this beloved German chorale in multiple guises: as a gentle pastorella, in strict two-part imitation (canon), and in a final highly decorated prelude.

Bach's setting of *Herr Christ, der einge Gottes-Sohn* ("Lord Christ, the only Son of God") treats this Advent chorale in the usual manner of *Orgelbüchlein* chorales: with the melody in long notes in the soprano and imitative figuration below. This ancient hymn text notes, in its initial verse, that the coming "Christ...is the morning star, whose beams extend far beyond all other stars."

A prodigious talent as a young pianist and composer, Welsh composer William Mathias wrote music in many genres, but is best known for his sacred choral works in the Anglican tradition. Today's **introit**, an excerpt of one of Mathias' most performed anthems for choir and organ, displays his use of captivating rhythm and dynamic range in portraying the familiar Advent text, as well as his idiomatic writing in both vocal and instrumental mediums.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover art by Diana Weiss.

The Affirmation of Faith comes from The Iona Abbey Book of Worship.

The Magnificat (Latin for "Magnifies") is a canticle with text spoken by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth in Luke 1:46–55, and is one of the eight most ancient Christian hymns. Beginning in the Renaissance, many composers have set these words to music, including in sung Vespers and as stand-alone works. Our **an- them** is one of several settings of the Magnificat penned by Charles Villiers Stanford, who also penned a corresponding Nunc dimittis, the canticle of Simeon also found in Luke 1. The two settings, sometimes referred to as a "Mag and Nunc", make up a traditional pair that remains a regular part of the Anglican Evensong service.

Pifa ("Pastoral Symphony") is one of only two instrumental movements in the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah*, and is often overlooked by audiences and fans of the work. Through typical pastoral musical themes like the key (F major) and meter (12/8), this short interlude provides a vivid musical depiction of the shepherds watching their flock, as well as a much-needed respite from the excitement of the preceding *For Unto Us a Child Is Born* and before the triumphant *Glory to God*. The title itself is derived from the shepherds who would travel the streets of Rome at Christmas ('pifferai').

— Notes by Matthew Dirst & Justin Langham

IN OUR PRAYERS

Robert Estill and family upon the death of Susan Estill on November 26. A memorial service will be held on Monday, December 23 at 11:00 AM.

St. Philippians and their families – Dan Cleveland; Robin Willis; Janet Davis; Dick Howard; Jeremy Mattern; Carmen Stevenson; Nidhal Aldarraj; Scott Easterly; Bill Holden; Roderick James; David Winship; Bob Ardell; Richard Johnson; Philip McDaniel; Charlotte Kibler; Carolyn Vestal; Diane Clarke; Karen Morris; Susan Huffman; Emily Estill; Barbara Cavanaugh; Mary Herlitz; Jan Ostendorf; Dick Nunn; Ben Dees; Joe Harwood; Kathryn Harwood; Nancy E. Johnson; Beverly Baker; Eleanor Grant; Judy Nunn; Molly Boren-Whitney; Don Padgett; Steve Adger; Judith Crane; Arlette Keene; Mezgebe Gebray; Jacqui – cousin of Angelina Fonseca-Grewal; Raquel Calhoun -sister-in-law of Pam Keever; Jerry Isbell – son-in-law of Bill & Karen Morris; Terese Murphy- cousin of Gary Gardner and Peg Palisin; Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson and partner John Bonica; Sheila Kinsky and her children – sister of Bill Connolly; Vera Moore – mother of Chuck Johnson; Paige Everhart – sister of Nancy E. Johnson; Ann Perenyi – mother of Lad Perenyi; and Ann Perkins Cloud – cousin of Stephen Paine.

Homebound – Elizabeth Arp; Beverly Baker; John Bobbitt; Joan Boelens; Edith Patterson; Joyce Randolph; George and Lorraine Scott; Mary Sinderson; and Sondra Sullivan.

Friends of St. Philippians – Brenda Paulk – friend of Bonnie Moore; Janet Rowlands – friend of Mary Mcguire; Pete & Gloria Benevides, Jay Stokes & Anna Domonte, friends of Curt & Sharon Webb; Marianne Hash – friend of Jane Cooper; Annette Covey – friend of Guy & Melissa Aldrich; [Stephen Wedemeyer and Mary Watters - friends of Bill and Jacqueline Hamilton Taylor](#); Claude Bowden – friend of Peg Palisin and Gary Gardner; Kenneth and Donna Benton – friends of William Rowe; Tom Barnett - friend of Robin and Gary Willis; Jackie Janacek, Bill Ward, Joyce Freudenberg and Annie & Sidney Roach– friends of Stephen Paine; Betsy Shear Lewis – friend of Laney Miller; and Shirley Stubblefield – friend of Barbara Runge.

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

Prayer List is a powerful tool for bringing comfort, healing, and peace to those in need. So, let's keep it up to date and continue to lift up our brothers and sisters in prayer.

MONDAYS IN ADVENT – LECTIO DIVINA ON ZOOM – 9:00-9:20 AM – Dec. 23 concludes *Lectio Divina*. The ancient desert fathers and mothers believed that scripture was like a love letter written to us by God. Thus, the meditative, guided scriptural reflection known as *Lectio Divina* ("divine reading") assumes that God speaks to us intimately, God is already praying in us, and we'll experience a profound encounter with the heart of God, rather than an intellectual study of scripture. To prepare, you are encouraged to choose a comfortable place to sit wherever you are (at home, work, in the car) and all participants will have video off and sound off during the Zoom. If you would like to participate email Keatan at: keatan@saintphilip.net.

TODAY – DEC. 22 at 1:15 PM, anyone filled with Christmas cheer is invited to attend a screening of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" at Rooftop Cinema across the street on top of Whole Foods. You can purchase tickets (first come, first serve) online at <https://rooftopcinemaclub.com/houston/venue/uptown/>



CHOCOLATE MINIS FLASH SALE!

Fairly-traded milk or dark chocolate Minis are still available in small festive gift bags, \$4 for a bag of 12. Stop by the Gathering Area **TODAY**, before and after worship, for the perfect "little something" for a teacher, mail carrier, delivery driver, co-worker, or neighbor!



CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

4:30 PM	7:00 PM
<i>A Whimsical Telling</i> OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS	<i>Communion Service</i> WITH THE ST. PHILIP CHOIR

*Duerr
Lecture
Series*



NEXT YEAR 2025

Mark your calendars for next year's event



Dr. Brian K. Blount

President Emeritus, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA
 Scholar, Author, Pastor

Speaker for the 28th Annual Duerr Lecture Series,
February 23, 24, and 25, 2025

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES START AT 9:45 A.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

GODLY PLAY – Ages 3 – Kindergarten – ROOM 103

CHILDREN: Grades 1-4 – Room 105 – From the Manger – Olga Piskor & Jon Martin. Hunger is a universal human experience, so it's no wonder that the story of Jesus – the one who came to feed the hungry – begins, ends, and centers around food. We will see how the baby born in a bread town continues to feed a hungry world today. Matching Advent calendars available for children, families, and anyone else who wants them.

YOUTH – Grades 5-12 – DINING ROOM – On recess until January.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY – ROOM 204 – We studying Proverbs in Dr. Robert Alter's *The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* (2010). Join us from 9:30 to 10:40 AM to deepen our understanding of God's faithfulness to God's people from Dr. Alter's translation and commentary on the Biblical Hebrew. All are welcome.

CHURCH & SOCIETY – ROOM 201 – Join us from **9:30 AM – 10:40 AM** with presentations in person and by Zoom. **Dec. 22** - Spiritual Pilgrimage for Racial Justice and the Montreat Youth Conference 2024 "Planting Peace" - St. Philip youth and their friends, with Rev. Keatan King and Rev. Omar Rouchon, tell the story of their summer trip to the Montreat Youth Conference and their visits to sites of the Civil Rights Movement, to see first-hand how people of faith were, and are, an active force for social justice. The civil rights sites included a visit to the barn in which 14 year-old Emmett Till was abducted and lynched in Drew, Mississippi in 1955. Email Mickey Meyers if you would like to join any of the classes: churchsociety_stphilip@comcast.net.

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL – In the Children's Chapel, our young disciples learn the whos, whats, wheres, whens and whys of worship in the chapel, while also praying, seeing and hearing God's word at an age-appropriate level. Children return to join the congregation in the first few pews on the lectern side of the church for the last hymn. The Children's Chapel is held every 2nd and 4th Sunday when we have Sunday School classes. Children are able to participate in this during the worship service.

ST. PHILIP DURING THE WEEK

LAMBETH STUDY – Keatan King leads young adults in study every Monday evening at 7:00 PM via Zoom. It is a time of study, reflection, and prayer. If you would like more details, email Keatan King at:

keatan@saintphilip.net

SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDY GROUP – This group meets by zoom on first Monday nights, 7-8 PM to read and discuss our faith responses to social justice issues. The current study book is Barbara McQuade's *Attack from Within; how disinformation is sabotaging America*. Join us! Interested persons can contact Sara Jean Jackson at:

sjj10223@gmail.com.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY – Wednesday Bible Study with John Wurster is on recess until **Jan. 10, 2025**.

WOMEN'S MONTHLY BOOK CLUB – This self-led, interactive group produces lively discussions and wonderful fellowship. The next meeting is **Jan. 9** at 7:00 PM. We will discuss *The Collected Regrets of Clover* by Mikki Brammer. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Nina Lambright at:

nml@lambrightlaw.com.

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 in person in the office Conference Room and via Zoom at 11:45 AM. We are learning from *Too Busy Not to Pray* by Bill Hybels. If you would like to join them please contact Gary Gardner at: ggardne148@aol.com.

Thanks to all who have already made a 2025 pledge. Pledge cards can be placed in the offering plate Sunday or mailed to the church office. There is also an online option through [MySaintPhilip](https://www.mysaintphilip.org).

2024 pledge payments and additional gifts will help us bring this year's budget into balance.

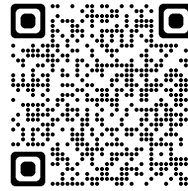
PLEDGES AS OF 12/17/24			
Year	# of pledge cards	Pledged	Difference from 2024
2024	144	\$1,105,652	
2025	139	\$1,226,498	\$1,120,846
	Goal	\$1,320,000	93% of goal

Merry Christmas

Thank you to those who have contributed poinsettias this Christmas to adorn our chancel. The list is continued on the next page.

<i>Given by:</i>	<i>Those we remember:</i>
Sally S. Alcorn	Fred C. Alcorn
Sally S. Alcorn	Cecile & Carl Stuebing
Bob & Lee Ardell	Our parents
Selena Brinegar	Julissa Claire Howe
Selena Brinegar	Uncle, Doug Pickens
Selena Brinegar	Grandparents, Helen & Clyde Pickens, Gene Martin
Pete & Florence Bunch	JoEllen, Gene, & Dorothy
Kate Burkart	Susan Estill
David & Nancy Castro	Our parents, Elwood & Nancy Vogt
David & Nancy Castro	Our parents, Rev. Vincent and Margaret Castro
Jane Cooper	Lillian Bantau
Jane Cooper	Dan Cooper
Jane Cooper	Katy Mason
Liz Crowell	My mother, Fannie Scott Tapper
Elizabeth Duerr	Susan Estill
Elizabeth Duerr	Sue & Bill Baier
Janet & Carl Eskridge	John & Rita Hannah
David & Joyce Fox	Jack Fox
David & Joyce Fox	Dan Flowers
Teri & Tom Hall	Capt. & Mrs. William A Racette (Teri's parents)
Teri & Tom Hall	Mr. & Mrs. William Barnes Hall (Tom's parents)
Jane Lee	Bill Lee
Jane Lee	Mary Bratton & Susan Estill
Jim & Susan Leonard	Beedie & Stanley Heaps
Jim & Susan Leonard	James Henry Leonard V
Jim & Susan Leonard	Doris Leach Leonard
Jim & Susan Leonard	James Henry Leonard Jr.
Jim and Nancy Lomax	Delores & J.W. Lomax
Jane Malczewskyj	Loved Ones
Celie Matteson	Parents: Pete & Gussie Heilbron
Jan Meyer	My Parents, Don & Valerie Meyer
Dale Miller	Barger Miller
Dale Miller	Louise Porter
Barbara Runge	Rusty Howard
Barbara Runge	Eugene & Ruth Howard
Barbara Runge	Glen & Affie Tate
Barbara Runge	Bill & Martha Runge
Barbara Runge	Trudy Cleveland
Barbara Runge	Velma Guy Tolbert
David & Hallie Spence	Paxton Williams
Karen St. Laurent	Susan Estill
Julie Wangler	Thomas Wangler
Hope Wilmarth	Lance
Ruena Wood	My husband, Dr. Rev. Stuart Wood, & his past years of ministry to God's glory
John Wurster & Deb Burks	Darnall Burks

<i>Given by:</i>	<i>Those we honor:</i>
Linda Bevill	The members of the Stewardship Committee
Bob & Bebe Burns	The St. Philip Staff
Tom & Barbara Cavanaugh	Our family
David & Sherri Dees	The birth of Willa Leone Dees
Elizabeth Duerr	The music staff, singers, ringers, and instrumentalists
Elizabeth Duerr	The pastoral staff
McNair Johnson	Sunday school teachers & youth group leaders
Suzanne & David Kerr	Our 3 fine pastors
Walter & Margaret King	Our wonderful St. Philip staff members
Mary McGuire	Angelina Fonseca-Grewal for leadership this past year on the Mission Committee
Bonnie & Greg Moore	Our children, Zach, Clint, & Audra
Bonnie & Greg Moore	Our Grandchildren, Sebastian, & #2 in June
Glenna Scott	Wendell & Mary Scott
David & Hallie Spence	Mary Linda Williams
Hope Wilmarth	Our grandchildren: Isabelle, Jeb, Arden, Gertrude, Clara and Elliot
Anne & Butch Wilson	Angelina Fonseca-Grewal for leadership this past year on the Mission Committee
John Wurster & Deb Burks	Marilyn & Sarah Burks



Welcome to Worship at St. Philip

Please register your attendance by scanning the QR code or by visiting the Guest Book tab at saintphilip.net.

**AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST,
we seek to be an inclusive,
grace-filled community,
engaging the world with open minds,
willing hands and generous hearts.**

**WE LONG
for deeper faith,
vibrant hope
and boundless love
for everyone, every day, everywhere.**

Thank you for joining us today! We hope that you find our worship together to be joyous, meaningful, and thought-provoking. **Children of all ages** are welcome to worship with their families. Activity bags containing worship aids for children are available in the narthex on the way into the sanctuary.

Nursery care is available throughout the morning from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Infants to age 4 are invited to our Nursery which is staffed by professional childcare providers. Please find our Nursery in Room 106 of the Education Building along the Sunday School Classroom hallway on the first floor. An usher or a greeter will be happy to direct you there.

A Hearing Loop is installed within the sanctuary. If you have a hearing aid equipped with a telecoil, please activate your "T switch" to hear the worship service most clearly. If you need assistance with hearing the service clearly and do not have a t-coil equipped hearing aid, please ask an usher for wireless headphones. **LARGE PRINT COPIES OF TODAY'S BULLETINS ARE IN THE NARTHEX.**

Connect with St. Philip through saintphilip.net and our social media. To join our e-mail list for regular news updates, send a note to lorrie@saintphilip.net.

If you are interested in joining St. Philip Presbyterian Church by profession of faith, by reaffirming your faith, or by transferring your membership, please speak with one of the ministers today or call the church office during the week. **The Session meets the third Sunday of each month after the 11:00 worship service in Room 100 for the purpose of receiving new members.**

Worship with us, whenever, wherever. Our 11:00 a.m. Sunday service is live-streamed at saintphilip.net. Services can be viewed live or later in our video archives.

Contributions, pledge payments, communion gifts and other donations to support the Church can be made anytime through our website, text "SPPC" to 73256 and follow the prompts, or sent to the Church Office at 4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056. To make stock contributions contact Denise Ferrell at denise@saintphilip.net.

Lost & Found – did you leave a pair of glasses, umbrella, or other item during worship? There is a canvas basket in the library where these items may be found. Jewelry, phones and more valuable items are turned into Lorrie Castle in the Church Office, lorrie@saintphilip.net or 713-622-4807.

I Give Electronically – in response to parents' hopes that their children might be able to see their ongoing commitment to St. Philip and with the intent to better represent the totality of our giving as a congregation, we have available in the pews giving cards that can be placed in the offering plate by our electronic givers

