

St. Philip's inSPIRE



No inSPIRE
the next
two weeks!

December 22, 2019 The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Lessons and Carols: A Team Effort

Preparations for this year's Lessons and Carols service, which falls annually on the Third Sunday in Advent, began months ago when Pat Gould, the St. Philip's Choir director; Jo Hethcox, director of the Cherub, St. Nicholas, Canterbury, and St. David Choirs; and Andrea White, the St. Cecilia Choir director, began choosing the anthems their choristers would be singing to drive home the message of our salvation that would be told through the nine lessons.

The Friday before the service, the Flower Guild led other members of the ECW (Every Church Woman), along with a crowd of volunteers, in "greening" the church, which for some meant getting several feet above their comfort zone as wreaths were hung above gates and lights and ornaments were draped about the 12-foot-tall tree in the narthex.



Clockwise from top left: Sexton Ben Singleton hangs a bow on the wreath above the south gate; Senior Warden Harry Gregorie hangs lights on the tree in the narthex; Sarah Stuhr gives directions for window arrangements; Caroline Burns explains the greening process to volunteers in the narthex.

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A Christmas Story

by David L. Gilbert, St. Philip's Youth Minister



David Gilbert with his future wife, Jordan Warlick

The Christmas Eve service is so beautiful and special to my heart for so many reasons. I was raised in a non-Christian home and didn't come to the Lord until I was 22. I was visiting Charleston for Christmas (this was before Jordan Warlick and I were wed) and it was my first time meeting her parents, Bill and Carolyn Warlick. They discovered I wasn't a Christian and started asking me questions and dared me to think deeply

about Christianity being the Truth. So on Christmas Eve when Bill asked, "Who wants to go to the Christmas Eve service at St. Philip's?", I quickly said, "I will go!"

My motives were not pure. I was trying to win him over and show him that I was just the kind of guy his daughter should marry! But God's motives were pure and Jesus began a work in me that unraveled all my defenses.

After the Gospel was preached I knew I had to ask Jesus into my heart forever! I did and sat there floored by the power of God, the music, and the presence of his people. I wept when the lights went out and the church sang, "Silent Night, Holy Night." I had heard that song hundreds of times before on the radio, but I had never heard it in a church and never with the power of the Holy Spirit showing me truth after truth through each stanza! I had no idea what God had in store for my life and there was no way I could have imagined that it would lead me to be a volunteer leader and then youth pastor at St. Philip's for 16 years. It is my joy to invite you and your loved ones to the very service that saved my soul!

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24

- 4:30 p.m.** ~ Christmas Pageant ~ Holy Eucharist: Rite I
- 7:30 p.m.** ~ Children's Choirs Sing ~ Holy Eucharist: Rite I
- 10:30 p.m.** ~ St. Philip's Choir Sings ~ Holy Eucharist: Rite I

Christmas Day: Wednesday, December 25

10:00 a.m. ~ Family Holy Eucharist

Lessons and Carols, *continued from front page*

The service once again drew a crowd that packed the pews, filled the extra chairs lining the aisles, and even had people standing in the balconies. Afterwards, much of that crowd reconvened for the Wassail Bowl reception in the Parish Hall, which St. Philipians and visitors have been blessed with year after year thanks to Gene Lesesne and his family and friends. The cardiac event that Gene endured last month—and God saw fit to pull him through by surrounding him with the right people at the right time—didn't stop him and his crew from heading the reception up again this year. They loaded the tables in the Parish Hall with meatballs, baked brie, egg rolls, fruit, the ever-popular cookie cake, and more, plus wassail (hot mulled cider), of course, and kept the platters stocked as more and more people filled their plates.

The Third Sunday in Advent is also the day when the Compassion Committee sets out all the poinsettias they've put together for those on our prayer list, those who have lost a loved one, and those who need to know we are thinking of them. St. Philipians responded to the call for help getting the plants delivered, and well before the activity in the Parish Hall died down, all plants had been picked up.



Above: Food and fellowship at the Wassail Bowl. Below: Gene Lesesne (left) with Officer Karen Nix and DuBose Blakeney.



Thank you to the many, many hands and minds that labored in the months, weeks, and hours leading up to this very special day in the life of our parish, and to those laboring the day of.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

—Ephesians 2:10

Thank You, St. Philip's!



Last month, St. John's Chapel, a mission church of our diocese, hosted "Unity in the Community," an afternoon of BBQ, music, and fellowship that aimed to foster peace while raising funds for security in a neighborhood plagued by crime. St. Philip's made a donation to the cause and helped promote the event, and the leadership of St. John's was very grateful:

To the Congregation of St. Philip's,

Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your amazing support of St. John's Chapel on the Eastside in standing with us for our Unity in the Community endeavor. Your generosity allowed us to fulfill our mission, successfully bringing disparate groups on the Eastside together as one agreeing on one need in common—better security and safety in the neighborhood.

We far exceeded our goals with God looking down and supporters like you. We're getting ready to install Ring cameras throughout the Eastside as a tool to deter and, if committed, bring criminals to justice. Thank you for standing with us.

In Christ,

*MaryAnne Poole, Vestry
The Rev. Matthew Rivers, Vicar*

Coming up at St. John's Chapel, 18 Hanover St.
Christmas Eve Healing Service - 2:00 p.m.

Grace and Mercy at Christmas

by Martha Vetter, World Missions Committee

During this Advent season, as we anticipate the beauty of Christmas, I am forever grateful to those who have walked alongside of me in this ministry to our friends at the Dufatanye Organization (DO) in Rwanda. As we have shared during the prayers on Sundays at St. Philip's, the DO is a nonprofit organization that ministers to victims of genocide and AIDS. This ministry assists in four different areas: The Dufatanye Cooperative, which is a farm; the Dufatanye Ministry Center, a community center; The Village of Hope, an outreach to the impoverished community near our site; and Medical Ministry and Navigation, where we assist sick and traumatized people at the DO and in the surrounding area.

The over-arching purpose of this ministry is to bring Jesus Christ, the living Word and the written Word, to all peoples with whom we minister. It is our prayer and desire that all may enter into a vibrant, growing relationship with Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Recently, I have been particularly moved by the story of a man I'll call "Ishmael" who has been a DO member since before 2006. Throughout the years, though Ishmael has been a Muslim

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Do you have news to share?

Submit your article by email to Lea Andrews at landrews@stphilipchurchsc.org. The inSPIRE prints on Tuesdays. Submissions should be sent by noon on Friday prior to the Tuesday printing. The inSPIRE is available as a weekly paper mailing to your home or as an email newsletter, and it can be found on our website. Please update your mailing preference with the church office.

The Calendar for the Next Two Weeks

Sunday, Dec. 22 (The Fourth Sunday in Advent)

- 8:15 a.m. **Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Andrew R. O'Dell
Ushers Team 6: Brad Wallace, captain
Lector Bob Kunes
Chalice Ann Harrington, Bob Kunes
Altar Guild Ginny Ravelen, Louise Sheridan
Flower Guild Laura Jenkins Thompson, Florance Anderson, Kirsten Barr, Mara Brockbank, Bryn Redman, Ann Rhett, Nancy Rhett
- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School (Grade 4 and below) ~ Parish House, Ground Floor
 Sunday School (Grades 5 & 6) ~ Chapel Undercroft
 Confirmation Class (Grade 7) ~ Tea Garden
 Sunday School (Grades 8-12) ~ Parish House, Youth Room
 Adult Choir Rehearsal ~ Ministries Hall, Choir Room
- 9:30 a.m. Rector's Adult Forum, Jeff Miller ~ Parish House, Parish Hall
 Foundations, Andrew O'Dell ~ Parlor, Ministries Hall
- 10:30 a.m. Children's Church ~ Parish House, room 109
- 10:30 a.m. **Morning Prayer: Rite I ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Andrew R. O'Dell
Lectors Debbie Orvin, Bill Thompson, Lydia Evans
Ushers Team 6: Brad Wallace, captain
Greeters DuBose and Nancy Blakeney
Acolyte Mentor Cordes Ford
Acolytes Nathaniel Ford, Eliza Ford, Cecilia Ford, Mary Kathryn Lancaster, Lily O'Dell, Andrew O'Dell, Henson Norvell, Owens Settle, John Settle, Louise Martin

12:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant Rehearsal ~ Church

- 6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group ~ Parish House, Parish Hall
 7:00 p.m. Young Professionals Bible Study ~ Hipp Residence, Downtown

Monday, December 23 (Church open to visitors 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.)

Tuesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

- 4:30 p.m. **Christmas Pageant, Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church**
Ushers TBD
Chalice Gerry McCord, Heather Dawson, Bill Phillipps, Buz Morris

Altar Guild TBD
Flower Guild All teams
- 7:30 p.m. **Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Jeffrey S. Miller
Lector Joanna Macmurphy
Chalice Martha Vetter, Noel Casey, Myron Harrington, Bill Thompson

Ushers Team 4: Bruce Freshley, captain
Greeters DuBose and Nancy Blakeney, Ann Harrington

Acolyte Mentor Brendan O'Shea
Acolytes Connor Lowndes, Frances O'Shea, DuBose Egleston, Mills Egleston, Cora Miller, Helen Belle Livesay

Altar Guild TBD
- 10:30 p.m. **Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Jeffrey S. Miller
Greeter Polly Dickson
Lector Suzanne McCord
Chalice Shep Davis, Robert Kunes, Gerry McCord

Ushers Tim Ford, Harry Gregorie, Jimmy Bailey
Acolyte Mentor TBD
Acolytes Cora Miller, TBD, TBD
Altar Guild Juli Garland

Wednesday, Dec. 25 (Christmas Day)

- 10:00 a.m. **Holy Communion ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Marc Boutan
Greeters Ed and Elaine Pendarvis
Lector Dana Heikes
Chalice Gerry McCord, Dana Heikes
Usher TBD
Altar Guild Clergy
Flower Guild All teams

Sunday, December 29 (The First Sunday after Christmas)

- 8:15 a.m. **Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Ryan T. Streett
Ushers Team 7: Jimmy Hagood, captain
Lector Lon Burriss
Chalice Randell Stoney, Lon Burriss
Altar Guild Betsy Harvey, Judy Middleton
Flower Guild The Fifth Sunday Team
- 10:15 a.m. Nursery ~ Parish House, room 108
- 10:30 a.m. Children's Church ~ Parish House, room 109
- 10:30 a.m. **Holy Communion: Rite One ~ Church**
Preacher The Rev. Ryan T. Streett
Lector Noel Casey
Chalice Richard Moore, Foster Gaillard, Lydia Evans, Malcolm Rhodes

Ushers Team 7: Jimmy Hagood, captain
Greeters Honoré LeClercq, Polly Dickson
Acolyte Mentor Jason Ayers
Acolytes Jackson Ayers, Harris Ayers, Reeves Bair, Bennett Bair, DuBose Egleston, Mills Egleston, Muffy Schaffler, William Russler, Chandler Grace Ghegan, Caroline Morris, Cam Stuhr, Juli Garland
- Altar Guild*

Vestry Nominations Due January 5



As the deadline to submit names to the Nominating Committee rapidly approaches amid this season of expectant waiting, please prayerfully consider those St. Philipians you feel would be faithful stewards of the bounty God has given us and who would help lead our parish spiritually. Please submit names to Dorothy Lancaster, Nominating Committee member (doroathome@yahoo.com), or to Rachel Murphy, Executive Assistant to the Rector (rmurphy@stphilipschurchsc.org).

SAVE THE DATE

- Dec. 24–Jan. 1 ~ Church office closed
 Jan. 3, 5 ~ Middle and High School Youth Groups resume
 Jan. 5 ~ Sunday School, Rector's Forum resume
 Jan. 5 ~ Epiphany Fellowship Brunch (after 10:30 service)
 Jan. 8 ~ Wednesday Morning worship resumes (8:00 a.m.)
 Jan. 8 ~ First Second Wednesday Men's Lunch (12 noon)
 Jan. 8 ~ Wednesdays Alive! service, supper, classes resume
 Jan. 9 ~ Rector's Bible Study resumes

Questions about the calendar?

Need to reserve a room for a church meeting or event?

Contact Rachel Murphy: rmurphy@stphilipschurchsc.org

Grace and Mercy, Vetter, continued from page two



Sandi prays with Ishmael

for much of his life, he has attended almost every one of my and others' Bible studies at our Ministry Center. He always sits in the first or second row and eagerly participates in our discussions and skits. All this time, he has straddled the fence between his Islamic faith and his interest in Christianity.

Ishmael is getting older and was recently admitted to the hospital multiple times. During these hospitalizations, he was pronounced "dead" five different times. His irregular, thready heartbeat and shallow breathing kept stopping, but each time he would come back!

Soon after this, Sandi Harding, a committed Christian nurse and counselor who had previously lived in Rwanda, returned to visit for the first time in ten years. As God's providence would have it, my old friend Godfrey Karema, the founder and president of DO, took her to see Ishmael at home. She

explained that because of Christ's love for him, God had allowed him to survive all five near-death experiences so that he could have this opportunity to be reconciled to Christ. She emphasized his need to repent from his sin, relinquish his Islamic faith, and place his full trust in Christ as his Lord and Savior.

That day, in his dark concrete house, as the light of Christ filtered in and the wind of the Spirit flowed among them, the angels rejoiced as Ishmael quietly prayed to receive Christ as his Lord and Savior. Later, he told Godfrey that he wanted to have a Christian burial, which was a sincere and sure testimony to his newfound faith.

What I haven't shared is that Ishmael has a son, Issa, whom I've written about previously. This is the very same Issa who required two surgeries to prevent him from losing his leg—or perhaps even his life—from a bone infection. Issa himself, you may recall, also made a commitment to Christ while he was in the hospital over two years ago!

Now, his father has trusted in Christ too! After Ishmael's prayer, his wife confessed that she used to be a Christian and wanted to recommit her life to Christ. This means that all the children in their family will now be raised as Christians instead of Muslims!



Martha with Ishmael and Issa

This reminds me of the account in Exodus where Moses stands lodged in the cleft of a rock, hoping to get a glimpse of God's glory. There, the LORD pronounces, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Let us thank the LORD that he has shown grace and mercy not only upon Issa, but his father and the entire family. How I thank God and you who have prayed and given for your beautiful ministry to this community of people, most especially Ishmael, Issa, and their family, who are desperate to have the hope and peace that only Christ can give.

As we remember that mystical night long ago when the radiant angels and heavenly host shone down brightly from heaven and joyfully praised God before an audience of lowly shepherds, let us also praise Him for the way He reached down to this humble family in a backwater village in rural Rwanda. Amen.

*I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,
and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.*

—Exodus 33:19b



We pray for the sick:

Katie Burris; Kelly Corlett; Elizabeth Flowers; Meredith Gale; Robert Gould; Tracy Graudin; Janet Hanger; Jonathan Hanger; Delia Hipp; Bobby Hood, Sr.; Patricia Irvin; Barbara Lisle; Joe Livesay; Miller Love; Jacqui Luce; Peter Moore; Stuart Philp; Aranell Ray; Edmund Rhett; Benjamin Schools; David Smythe; and Lindsey Wing.

We grieve with and pray for:

Wallace Marshall and family on the death of his brother, Jonathan Marshall, on December 12.

We pray for our expectant parents:

Ryan and Jennie Emerson, Oliver and Courtney Iselin.

We pray for protection for:

Becca Baird, Julia Beasley, Graham Blunt, Henry Clayton, Ben Colyer, David Daughtridge, Hayes Fair, George Hofer, Andrew Kane, Charles Kirkman, Frazier Kulze, John Mason, Ned Montgomery, Edward Pritchard, and David Scott serving in our Armed Forces.

We pray for our home missions:

Star Gospel Mission, Tricounty Family Ministries, Life Resources, St. John's Chapel, and the Open Door Committee.

We pray for our world missions:

Suzy McCall and LAMB, for the medical missions to Honduras, for ministry to victims of genocide and AIDS in Rwanda, for 10/40 Tribal Commission, for Water Mission, and for St. Jean Baptiste, our sister church, and the schools in Haiti.



Collect for the 4th Sunday in Advent:

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son Jesus Christ cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings for Sunday:

Isaiah 7:10-17
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25
Psalm 24

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH

142 Church Street | Charleston, SC 29401 | (843) 722-7734 | www.stphilipchurchsc.org

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday | 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Friday