

Notices for The Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20, 2020

Hello lovely people of St Philip's

As this will be the last bulletin this year (the staff are having some much-deserved time off between Christmas and New Year) I want to reflect a little on 2020. Who would have thought that it would become the year of COVID19, the year when the world as we knew it would disappear, a year when new normals became the norm!

As you will recall, my year started with a relapse of PTSD symptoms, which meant I was away for Vestry. I received so much love and support (and food) from so many people, so I want to start by saying a huge thank you to everyone who was there for me during this difficult time. As I convalesced, it became apparent to me just how quickly the pandemic was spreading. So much so that my very first decision on my return was to have to close down the church, something that was confirmed by the diocese a few days later.

A time of re-imagining began and in some ways a time of transformation too. We had to learn how to be church in a new way and I had to learn how to film, edit, produce and publish our services on YouTube (not something they teach you at theological college)! Of course, we all learned how to Zoom! At the same time, our long planned for physical changes to the church and building paid for by your huge generosity through the Capital Campaign, began. Our EcoRoof was installed, as was a hearing loop system. Our pews were 'up cycled' and re-imagined by local craftsman Mark Turner, into the beautiful and much coveted stackable alternatives. Pat and her team of volunteers, Ash Noetzal and Duncan Wilson, went into overdrive, tiling, painting, and fixing all manner of things in order to get the church COVID ready for when the building was allowed to re-open.

Once we did re-open in August, the planned for changes paid off immediately. We were able to easily socially distance people using our new pews and we started new (and more traditional) forms of worship, drawing new people 'under our roof' for the first time. We also learnt that having an online presence can reach new people in new ways as we re-imagined what it meant to be community in the face of the pandemic. This was highlighted by the success of our re-imagined online Christmas Fair and Silent Auction, which raised over \$10,000. Huge thanks to Debbie Matheson and the Fundraising Working Group for their hard work making it happen!

We all owe a huge debt of thanks to our leadership team, our Wardens, Trustees and Parish Council, who all had to make some very brave and difficult decisions this year. In particular, to our Treasurer, Don Thomson, who has been the most reassuring and steadfast presence at the financial helm of the good ship St Philips! Thanks also to our staff, Beth, Michael, Pat, and Christine, for all their hard work and dedication.

It has been hard to be together, apart. Thanks to you, the lovely people of St Philip's for all of your continued support and commitment to the cause, particularly those of you who support

the church financially and for all those who helped us keep in touch with one another, the St Philip's Ringer's and to Janet Brown and the Pastoral Team, thank you.

God's Kingdom is all about re-imagining our world. Maybe as we reflect more on this, most extraordinary of years, we might come to realise just how much God's Spirit has been at work in it all? One thing is for sure, God continues to call us to be like Mary, to be God-bearers to a world so caught up in continued uncertainty and fear, bringing hope and light to those who need it most.

Continued Advent Blessings and a very Merry Christmas to you all.

Love and prayers,
Stuart

COFFEE HOUR Sundays at 11:00 AM on Zoom

We look forward to seeing **you**. Click the blue link at 11:00 am, using your computer for best results, or join by phone: <https://zoom.us/j/454815164>
By phone, dial 778-907-2071. Coffee Hour ID is 454815164.

DATES TO NOTE

Sun. Dec. 13	Advent Service Online
Sun Dec. 20	A Child's Christmas in Wales read by Michael Murray 4pm
Thurs. Dec 24	Christmas Eve Nativity 4pm
Thurs Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols 7- 8pm
Dec. 24 – Jan. 3	Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Parish Office closed

WEBSITE WORSHIP Sundays at 10:00

Join Stuart and others in Sunday morning Website Worship and follow along with the order of service delivered to you. The services are recorded and posted by Saturday evening, so you can watch and revisit them at your convenience.

St Philip's will continue to offer online worship for the many worshippers who cannot attend in person or who live afar.

Visit <https://www.stphilipsdunbar.com/blog>

OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT - PRAYER, CARE AND SHARE

Wednesdays via Zoom at 10:00 AM

On your computer, click the link at 10:00 AM <https://zoom.us/j/2939572088>

To join the gathering by phone, dial 778-907-2071. The meeting ID is 2939572088.

MIDDAY PRAYERS

Join Stuart Mondays to Thursdays for Midday Prayers. Whether you are at home or busy at work, this 20 min service will help you relax and reconnect with yourself, your community and your Creator... <https://zoom.us/j/98044347032?pwd=NjdlQmg5bTc4Ym9GajdYL1BZNtBZz09>
To join by phone, dial 778-907-2071 Meeting ID: 980 4434 7032

PRAYER LIST

Please pray for those who have asked for our prayers at this time: Sally Antrobus and her family, Ann Halfnights, Penny Francis and family, Greg, Maura and Brian, Nancy, Tracy and family, Larry Hoad and Mike Lane, Brenda Harrison, Sarah Burns, Jan Alexander, Mia Salamito, Diana Bragg and Family, Hazel Maunder, and Min's sister Jill and Min's advocate Dorothy McNaughton.

Let us pray for those who have died, The Rev. David Hawkins, Ken Crookall, Eve Alexander, and for their friends and family bereaved by their loss.

MILESTONES

Let's wish Doreen Cox a blessed birthday on Dec 21 followed by her Wedding Anniversary on Dec 24.

ADVENT STUDY

Sign-up for a daily email in Advent with stories from people throughout the diocese. How did God meet them in different situations in their lives? The lectionary readings of the Sundays in Advent will inspire the theme for each day's story to be delivered to your inbox. The title of this Advent Calendar is the name of a much-loved hymn, whose first line rings out "Tell out, my soul the greatness of the Lord." Follow the link to sign up for daily emails that begin on November 29th. <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/programs/2020-advent>

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

Many parishioners make a special donation at Christmas time, and visitors leave something in the collection plate while enjoying a Carol Service or Family Christmas Service. All these in-person opportunities have been suspended. Please make a generous Christmas donation on our website at <http://www.stphilipsdunbar.com/> by clicking on the button that says "Donate".

SHARING FELLOWSHIP AT CHRISTMAS

For many parishioners, suspended gatherings and cancelled travel until Jan. 8 mean we won't be sharing Christmas or New Year's with friends and family. Perhaps you live alone or with one other person in your bubble. You are actually allowed to visit safely, according to Dr Bonnie Henry: "A core bubble is one to two friends if you live alone". People who live alone can continue to see one or two people (CBC News) in "a select bubble for those who live alone" (CTV). Dr Henry encourages us to look for ways to stay in touch and be festive while keeping each other safe. (CTV) With an invitation, a call, and on Zoom, let's reach out to each other, safely. (Debbie Matheson)

A NOTE FROM OUR ACCOUNTANT

All reimbursement claims should go to Pat, in the Parish office. Office hours Sat-Wed, 10-2pm. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

STEWARDSHIP 2021: A Message from the Trustees

Please pledge as generously as you can in this time of lost rentals, curtailed fundraising, and suspended in-person events. We need to support St Philip's everyday expenses and ministries even when we cannot attend in person. For the 2020 budget, Finance used an identified giver list of 82 pledgers and 29 regular donors. To date, Paul Harrison has recorded 55 pledges for 2021. If you're running late or this is new for you, we look forward to your pledge. Call Pat in the office if you need assistance: 604-224-3238

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

As we complete our second year of the three-year Capital Campaign, we have much to thank donors for: the buildings are protected and updated, and we are looking at future staffing. We are reminded to make our contribution soon. You might even consider *Donation of Securities and Related Tax Benefits*. <https://www.stphilipsdunbar.com/pages/2019-capital-campaign>

GRATITUDE CONFETTI

On behalf of the Outreach Committee I would like to thank everyone who donated to the Christmas Hamper Drive this year. Thanks to you we had sponsors for all the families on our list. It was different this year supplying only gift cards, but it seemed to go smoothly and the cards were dropped on time. Many thanks again for taking part in this annual project!

-Sandy Harrison

Special thanks to Elizabeth and Derek Knox for setting up the nativity in the church! Well done!

Staying Close While We're Apart,

Stuart Hallam (Rector), Debbie Matheson, Brian Mix, Diana Bragg, and Suzi Noetzel (Wardens)

