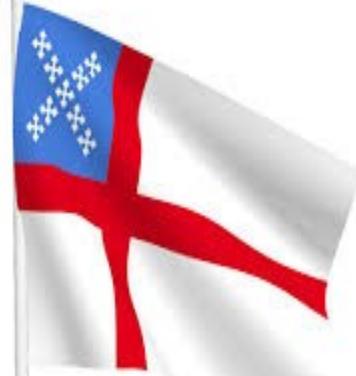


# CommonLife

December-January 2017-18    Volume 8-9  
Issue 12 & 1



**Phone:**  
(315) 353-2037

**Our E-mail:**  
stphilips@live.com

**Our website:**  
saintphilipsnorwood.com

The Rt. Rev. William H. Love, Bishop

The Rev. Kathryn Boswell, Rector

**Wardens:**

Romi Sebald      Helen Harris

**Vestry:**

Charlie Colbert      Lynn Howe  
Karen Morgan      Sharon Yousey

:



*St. Philip's Church*

*Rector's  
Message*



Rev. Kathryn Boswell  
Rector

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*St. Philip's Church*  
42 S. Main St.  
P. O. Box 225  
Norwood, NY 13668

**TO:**

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have been taught, ever since we were old enough to listen to Christmas stories, or watch Christmas movies, that good people love Christmas, and bad, grumpy people hate Christmas. Am I right?

Exhibit A? Ebenezer Scrooge, the classic grump: miserly, mean, old and cranky. He hates Christmas so much he doesn't even like it when other people are excited about Christmas. But after a late-night visit from three spirits, Ebenezer's heart is transformed and he becomes a lover of all things Christmas, as well as a kindly, generous lover of all people. Moral of story? Salvation = Christmas cheer.

And then there's Exhibit B, the Grinch of Dr. Seuss fame (rendered seriously grinchy in my childhood by the scary voice of Boris Karloff.) The Grinch fumes and frets until he finds a way to ruin every-Who's Christmas, just so he won't have to listen to their joyful festivities. Lucky for the Grinch, his heart is transformed by the sweet voice and big blue eyes of Cindy Lou Who (who was no more than 2) – transformed, and heroically expanded in size, and the Grinch ends up at the head of the Who festive table, cheerfully carving up the roast beast for all. Same moral.

Exhibit C? Every Hallmark Christmas movie you have ever seen, where you absolutely know which guy is going to get the girl because it's always the guy who loves Christmas. So, anyway, you get the idea....

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the season of Christmas, with its bright decorations and ubiquitous music and many social demands, is something that many, many people anticipate with dread rather than joy. And it has nothing whatsoever to do with the size of their heart or the sincerity of their faith. For so many of our neighbors, for so many of the people you will pass on the street or bump into at the Post Office or chat with in the checkout line at Perry's in the coming weeks, the annual celebration of Christmas is a burden and a source of sadness. There are a lot of reasons for that, and none of the reasons have anything to do with being bad people.

The holiday season for many people, and maybe especially for the elderly, magnifies the reality of our losses. There are few seasons that have greater power for reminding us of those who are no longer present. The death of loved ones, even deaths many years' past, have renewed power to cause pain at Christmas, because of

all the memories that are stirred up at this season. Empty chairs seem all the more empty around a festive table. Sometimes even more painful are the absences of people who are still living but who have become estranged from us for one reason or another. Memories of holiday events long past, or holiday memorabilia that we have treasured, or the shadow of bitter words – our own words, or the words of others – these things can make Christmas a hard season, a season of sorrow, for many people.

For some of our neighbors, the expectations of the holiday season place other kinds of burdens on them. Parents who struggle through the year to feed and clothe their children find themselves overwhelmed by a culture that glorifies extravagance. The world's Christmas measures love in dollars and cents, and demands a Martha Stewart-like elegance from all "real" homes. The magazine covers at the checkout line, the ads between TV show segments, store displays and the inevitable comparison between their own children and their more-fortunate schoolmates – these can make the season of love, peace and joy an intolerable burden. People who struggle with addictions often find the holiday season one long source of stress. People who battle depression often find their depression deepened by the dark days of winter and the unavoidable gaiety they can neither avoid nor share.

And yet, it is for these very people, for the sad, for the lonely, for the afflicted and hopeless and poor, that the Child was born two thousand years ago. Christians have made much ado in the last few years about the importance of saying "Merry Christmas" rather than "Happy Holidays." But if we focus on such trivial outward manifestations of this holy season we have missed the message entirely. Our neighbors may not be able to be open to the lights or the carols or the greetings, the joyful gatherings or the gaily-wrapped gifts. But they are always open to the true gift we have been given – the Love of God, who arrived on a cold night in a dark stable to an unwed mother and a poor laborer. No tree, no tinsel, no presents, no "Merry Christmas."

**"Love came down at Christmas," Christina Rosetti wrote:**

Love all lovely, Love Divine,  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,  
Worship we our Jesus,  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign."

Of all the gifts we give this Christmas, above all let us give the gift of Love: love without judgment, love with compassion, love that listens, love that shares burdens rather than adding to them. Love shall be our token. And for that reason, Christmas is the most wonderful and blessed of seasons.

The Love of God be with you, with your families, and with your neighbors, all this holy season, and forever,

Kathryn+



## January 2018

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Common Cents closed	3 Maple wood service 10:30 am Canton	4 Common Cents closed	5	6 The Epiphany Common Cents 10-Noon No Common Threads
7 The First Sunday after the Epiphany The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rick Littlejohn guest preacher Coffee Hour	8	9 10 am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	10	11 Common Cents 10-2pm	12	13 Common Cents 10-Noon 10 am Vestry
14 The Second Sunday after the Epiphany 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Coffee Hour	15	16 10am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	17	18 Common Cents 10-2pm Week of Prayer for Christian unity January 18-25th	19	20 Common Cents 10-Noon 10 am Daughters of the King
21 The Third Sunday after the Epiphany 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Coffee Hour Annual Meeting	22	23 10am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	24.	25 Common Cents 10-2pm	26	27 Common Cents 10-Noon
28 The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany 10 am Holy Eucharist Coffee Hour	29	30 10am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	31 10:30 am Maplewood service Canton Community Dinner 5-6:30pm  Community Supper			

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Common Cents 10-Noon 9-1 Christmas Bazaar
3 The First Sunday of Advent 10:00 am Coffee Hour	4	5 10 am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	6 Maplewood service Canton 10am Healthy Living Workshop 11-1:30 pm	7 Common Cents 10-2pm	8	9 Common Cents 10-Noon  Dcn. Patricia Beauharnois Ordination 11 am Dec. 9th
10 The Second Sunday of Advent 10:00 am Coffee Hour  3pm Noteworthy Handbell Concert	11	12 10 am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	13 Women's Guild Noon 1:30 pm at Nancy's  Healthy Living Workshop 11-1:30 pm	14 Common Cents 10-2pm	15	16 Common Cents 10-Noon 10 am Vestry Mtg.  11 am Daughters of the King
17 The Third Sunday of Advent 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Coffee Hour 5pm Christmas Caroling at St. Philip's	18	19 10 am Bible Study Common Cents 10-2pm	20	21 Common Cents 10-2pm	22	23 Common Cents 10-noon
24 The Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Coffee Hour  5pm Lessons & Carols	25 Unto Us a Child is Born! And He Shall Be Called Emmanuel, God with Us	26 Common Cents closed	27	28 Mtr. Kathryn away  Common Cents closed	29	30 Common Cents closed
31 The First Sunday After Christmas Day 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rick Littlejohn guest preacher Coffee Hour						

## The Birth of Jesus from the Gospel of St. Luke

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."



Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## AMAZING PEACE: A Christmas Poem

by Maya Angelou

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes  
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.  
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche  
Over unprotected villages.  
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.  
What have we done to so affront nature?  
We worry God.  
Are you there? Are you there really?  
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters,  
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope  
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.  
The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,  
Come the way of friendship.

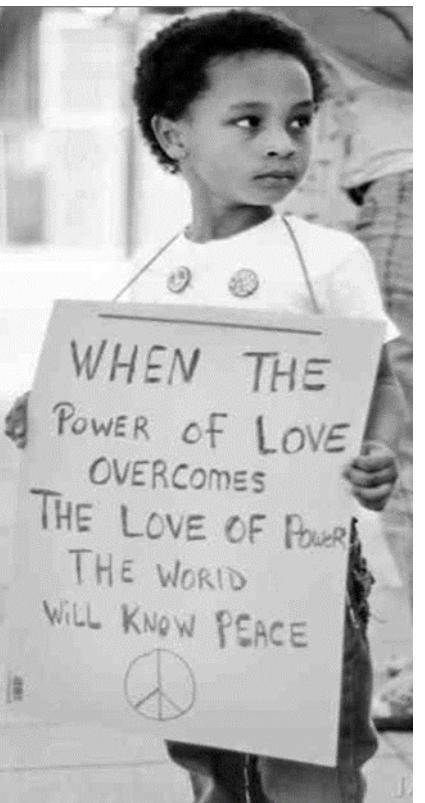
It is the Glad Season.  
Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the corner.  
Flood waters recede into memory.  
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us  
As we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children  
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets.  
Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things,  
Even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.  
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.  
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.  
We hear a sweetness.  
The word is Peace.  
It is loud now. It is louder.  
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence.  
It is what we have hungered for.  
Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.  
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.  
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.  
We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.  
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.  
Peace.



**DINNER**  
Come and share a  
home-cooked meal  
with us!

No Community  
Dinner in December

January 31

Chicken and Biscuits  
Steamed vegetables  
Fruit salads  
Desserts



### December Birthdays

3rd—Joseph Swan  
14th—Charles Colbert  
27th—Laura Kieley  
**January Birthdays**  
6th—Karen Morgan  
11th—Robert Weaver  
12th—Charles Morgan



### December Anniversaries

25th—Robert and Charlotte Firman



## O Come Let Us Adore Him!

Celebrate the Nativity of our Lord  
at St. Philip's!

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m.**

Sing Christmas carols  
(in the comfort of our Parish Hall!)

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.**

Come for Holy Eucharist  
on the Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Then join us again at **5:00 p.m.**

For a service of Lessons and Carols  
followed by a covered-dish supper.

## In Brief



*Join us for a free concert  
of Christmas music  
performed by the*



*Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.  
Refreshments and fellowship  
following the concert.  
Invite your friends and neighbors!*

Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.  
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian,  
Implore you, to stay a while with us.  
So we may learn by your shimmering light  
How to look beyond complexion and see community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a language  
To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ  
Into the great religions of the world.  
We jubilate the precious advent of trust.  
We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of hope.  
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices  
To celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortals, Believers and Non-Believers,  
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.  
Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud.  
Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves  
And we say without shyness or apology or hesitation.

Peace, My Brother.  
Peace, My Sister.  
Peace, My Soul.

*Note from Mtr. Kathryn – In this beautiful poem, Maya Angelou celebrates the coming of Jesus to all the peoples and religions of the world. I find truth in her words, not to deny the unique revelation of God as we know and love it in our Christian tradition, but to affirm that the true Jesus we worship and welcome is the Lord and Lover of all people, of every nationality and every religion.*





St. Philip's Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King became very active about a year ago as a result of a curiosity about the Cross, which is a symbol of our Order, and what the Order encompassed. After a three-month discernment process the St. Philip's Chapter increased to nine members. At this time I am unable to find the information, meeting minutes, etc., from when the Order originated, but I believe the original members were, Pat

LaVine, Marjorie Cyrus, Judy Gray, Karen Hampson, Harriett Swan, and Laurie Kellington; however, this information may not be completely accurate.

St. Philip's Chapter decided as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, to knit and crochet prayer shawls and prayer pockets to be given to anyone identified as needing this sign of grace to comfort them. The Order also has painted rocks which they will find places for people to discover, enjoy, and pass on for other's enjoyment. This appears to be a popular "fad" at the moment, as well as, an expression of love and faith. We are also interested and looking forward to making Anglican Prayer Beads

The Prayer Shawl ministry which the St. Philip's Order of the Daughters of the King has embarked upon is doing very well. Our first Prayer Shawl was given to our sister in Christ, Sharon Yousey. We are all aware of the lengthy life-struggle that Sharon has endured since last July. Her ordeal has been a very lengthy and precarious one. Sharon's illness coincided with the beginning of the Order's Prayer Shawl ministry so it was very fitting that she received our first prayer shawl.



Perhaps you have noticed the quilt rack in the back of the church which, at present, holds four prayer shawls. These shawls have been prayed over by the Daughters of the King and blessed by Mtr. Kathryn. Each shawl has a small cross attached to it as well as a prayer card. If you know of anyone whom you feel would be blessed by receiving a prayer shawl, please let any of the members of the Order of the Daughters know.

We also have a basket which holds "prayer pockets". The reason and use of these prayer pockets is for anyone who wishes, to take one and keep it in one's pocket where it is easily accessible to use as a focus when one wants to be settled and in prayer.

There are prayer request forms available on the designated table for the Daughters of the King in the back of the church and also on the bookshelf in the Parish Hall, for your use. Please remember that we are a confidential Order and any requests will be held in complete confidence unless you indicate otherwise in your request. Prayer is our main focus and we are here to pray for you and for anyone you request prayers for, please do not hesitate to use our prayer power for any need you have. There is a locked box in which you can insert your prayer requests – this is available in the back of the Church during services or in the Parish Hall at other times. Members: The Rev. Kathryn M. Boswell, Chaplain, Karen Morgan, President, Romi Sebald, Secretary/Treasurer, Anna Crump, Irene Hargrave, Helen Harris, Lynn Howe, Millie Weaver, Cheryl Woodward. If any woman has a desire to know more about the Order of the Daughters of the King, please speak with Mtr. Kathryn or any of the Daughters listed above. All are encouraged and are welcome.



### The House of Christmas by G.K. Chesterton

There fared a mother driven forth  
Out of an inn to roam;  
In the place where she was homeless  
All men are at home.

The crazy stable close at hand,  
With shaking timber and shifting sand,  
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand  
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,  
And strangers under the sun,  
And they lay on their heads in a foreign land  
Whenever the day is done.

Here we have battle and blazing eyes,  
And chance and honour and high surprise,  
But our homes are under miraculous skies  
Where the yule tale was begun.

A Child in a foul stable,  
Where the beasts feed and foam;  
Only where He was homeless  
Are you and I at home;

We have hands that fashion and heads that know,  
But our hearts we lost - how long ago!  
In a place no chart nor ship can show  
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,  
And strange the plain things are,  
The earth is enough and the air is enough  
For our wonder and our war;  
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings  
And our peace is put in impossible things  
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings  
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening  
Home shall men come,  
To an older place than Eden  
And a taller town than Rome.  
To the end of the way of the wandering star,  
To the things that cannot be and that are,  
To the place where God was homeless  
And all men are at home.