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The Friend

January 2014

Come as you are to Worship, Wonder, and Work in Jesus' name!

Telling the Truth about Christianity

by Pastor Joel Wight Hoogheem

One of the great gifts of social media is the ability to share articles, pictures, and videos that are thoughtful, poignant, or particularly meaningful. Social media also lets many different voices be heard – often voices that might not be heard were it not for the possibility of “going viral.”

All this is by way of introducing an article I saw referenced on Facebook that I then shared further. Stephen Mattson, on the Sojourners blog, recently posted an article called “Seven Lies About Christianity – Which Christians Believe.”

I’ll share here the seven lies Mattson highlights with my own parenthetical clarifications and a few of my own thoughts. I think he makes some great points and highly recommend reading his original article (<http://sojo.net/blogs/2013/12/03/seven-lies-about-christianity-which-christians-believe>).

1. You’re always happy.
2. Your problems will disappear.
3. You’ll be “blessed” (financially).
4. Missions and ministry is fun & rewarding.
5. All your questions will be answered.
6. The Christian community is (always) great.
7. It makes you better than others.

In a nutshell, following Jesus will not make you perpetually happy, problem-free, and wealthy. Being a Christian is often hard (and unrewarding) work filled with questions among difficult people and circumstances that does nothing to improve your social standing.

Of course, any serious Bible study alongside serious commitment to a Christian congregation exposes all seven of these lies. What these falsehoods represent is a romanticized notion of a type of Christianity that has, in many ways, ignored Christ.

Mattson thoughtfully summarizes,

The problem with romanticizing Christianity is that we turn our faith into a product, using various selling points to make it look more attractive. It's not that the above headlines are entirely false, it's just that Christians publicize them as being entirely true. This creates false expectations and idols, and inevitably leads to disappointment and sense of failure.

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- Companion Congregation: Bille Lutheran in Nigeria**
- Ministers: All members of the Parish**

Friend deadline: 1st Tuesday of Jan. (1/7) for February Friend
E-mail typed copy to: nancyln@splcmn.org (250 word max)

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*Everyone
is welcome to
worship at
St. Philip's*

**Telling the Truth
about Christianity**
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Instead of promoting Christianity as a set of benefits, we need to promote Christ. In the end, when everything else fails and falls short, Jesus will remain faithful through it all. We can trust him above any form of religion we attempt to turn Christianity into.

Promoting Christ seems like something worth our time and energy. After all, it is Christ who names us and claims us and who sets us free from the bonds of sin and death. It is Jesus who looks the powers and principalities of the world in the eye and says, "There is a different and better way. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

So let's keep using social media to share the Truth. And let's keep "going viral" with the good news of Jesus Christ. ♦



~Stephen Mattson

"The problem with romanticizing Christianity is that we turn our faith into a product, using various selling points to make it look more attractive."



**St. Philip's
Disaster Relief
Annual Fundraiser**

Lasagna Dinner and Auction
Mark your calendars for the annual Disaster Relief Lasagna Dinner and Auction on Sunday, February 9, 2014. There will be two seatings for the dinner – at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. The menu includes lasagna, salad, breadsticks, dessert, and beverages. (This year, gluten free lasagna will be served at the 4 p.m. seating.) The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5 to 12. Tickets must be purchased in advance and will be sold following worship services on January 12, 18, 19, 26, February 2. The auction will once again be sealed bid with items available for bidding after services on Saturday, February 8 and Sunday, February 9 and at the dinner.

The dinner/auction is the main source of income for the Disaster Relief ministry. Please support the Disaster Relief by buying tickets to the dinner (or making a donation if you are unable to attend) and bidding on the auction items. Your support ensures that the journey continues for the Disaster Relief teams in 2014. ♦

Vision

St. Philip's is a vibrant Christian community, working together to know and love God, our neighbors, and the world.

Mission

St. Philip's Lutheran is a community church centered on Christ that invites you to come and see Jesus.

Come as you are to Worship, Wonder,
and Work in Jesus' name!



JANUARY 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5 8:30 am Worship 10:30 am Adult Forum Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	6 9:30 am Joy Circle 1:00 pm Prayer Group 1:20 pm Chair Yoga 5:45 pm Girl Scouts 5:50 pm Yoga 6:00 pm Worship Band 6:00 pm Cub Scouts	7 Friend Deadline 11:00 am Staff Meeting 2:00 pm Tuesdays Together 3:30 pm Endowment Meeting 7:00 pm Evangelism Committee	8 8:30 am Work Crew, WOW 10:00 am Women's Book Club 6:30 pm Confirmation, gr. 6-8 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	9 7:00 am Men's Book Discussion 12:00 noon 55+ Accordionist 6:30 pm Bells of Praise	10 11 5:00 pm Saturday Evening Worship	11 5:00 pm Saturday Evening Worship
12 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Adult Forum Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 7:00 pm Mentor Meeting	13 9:00 am Glory Circle 1:00 pm Prayer Group 1:20 pm Chair Yoga 5:50 pm Yoga 6:00 pm Worship Band 6:00 pm Cub Scouts	14 11:00 am Staff Meeting 2:00 pm Tuesdays Together 4:30 pm Worship Planning 6:30 pm Parish Fellowship	15 8:30 am Work Crew, WOW 9:00 am Quilters 6:30 pm Confirmation, gr. 6-8 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	16 6:30 pm Bells of Praise 6:30 pm North Metro Photo	17 18 5:00 pm Saturday Evening Worship	18 5:00 pm Saturday Evening Worship
19 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Adult Forum Sunday School Blood Pressure Checks 10:30 am Worship	20 Church Office Closed	21 11:00 am Staff Meeting 2:00 pm Tuesdays Together 3:00 pm Lynwood Service 7:00 pm Baptism Class	22 8:30 am Work Crew, WOW 6:30 pm Confirmation, gr. 6-8 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	23 7:00 am Men's Book Discussion 6:30 pm Bells of Praise	24 8th & 9th Grade Confirmation Retreat	25 8th & 9th Grade Confirmation Retreat 5:00 pm Saturday Evening Worship
26 8:30 am Worship 9:30 am Adult Forum Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	27 1:00 pm Prayer Group 1:20 pm Chair Yoga 1:30 pm Knitters & Crocheters 5:45 pm Girl Scouts 5:50 pm Yoga 6:00 pm Worship Band 6:00 pm Cub Scouts	28 9:30 am Assemble Friend 11:00 am Staff Meeting 2:00 pm Knitters & Crocheters Tuesdays Together 6:45 pm Board Meeting	29 8:30 am Work Crew, WOW 6:30 pm FJE Grade 2 6:30 pm Confirmation, gr. 6-8 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	30 6:30 pm Bells of Praise 6:30 pm North Metro Photo	31	

Children & Family Ministry Update

Carly Tappe, Director of Children & Family Ministries

Sunday School

Happenings

In January we journey into the New Testament and learn more about Jesus' life here on earth.

We will read stories about Jesus's Baptism, a Wedding in Cana, Jesus going to Nazareth, and



the Disciples. Students in grades 1-5 will continue to work on weekly Bible Memory Verses along with learning the books of the Bible with a special song.

Nursery Ministry Update

In November we happily welcomed Lori Peterson as our new Nursery Ministry worker! The nursery is staffed every Sunday morning, 8:15 – 11:45 am for children ages 3 months – age 3. In addition to Lori we have wonderful volunteers that strive to provide a fun, safe, nurturing, Christian environment in our nursery. If you would like to volunteer in the nursery, please contact Carly. Please sign-up ahead of time. We are currently in need of volunteers to help during the 10:30 am worship service.

The Education Committee would like to thank the garage sale committee for their generous gift that was used to purchase a new pager system for our nursery. Our new system will help us provide the best service possible to the families and guests of St. Philip's.

Family Service Opportunity

Families of all shapes and sizes are invited to join in the fun Saturday, January 11, 9:00 – 11:00 am at **Feed My Starving Children** in Coon Rapids to pack meals. Please sign-up by emailing Carly at carlyt@plcmn.org. Vibrant Faith Ministries identifies **Four Key Faith Practices** essential for nurturing faith, values, and character formation. These **Four Keys** are the core concepts in nurturing strong parental faith and in strengthening relationships between other family members, thereby strengthening their faith. One of these **Four Keys** is Family Ser-

vice. Children, youth, and adults are most likely to be influenced by those who "walk the talk." There are many opportunities for service: some in the home, some in the congregation, some in the larger community. Whatever type of service you choose, it is best done with family members or other intergenerational groups.

Building Beautification

In December the Education committee and wonderful church volunteers started the painting project in the education wing, but there is still more work to be done!

Paint Party: Part Deux, Friday, January 17, 6:00 – 9:00 pm. All are welcome! Pizza will be provided and a movie will be shown in the youth room for our younger friends. We are excited to continue making a warm and welcoming environment!

First and Second Grade Faith Journey

Event: The Ten Commandments, God's Rules for our Life

This month's FJE will be on Wednesday, January 29, 6:30 – 7:30 pm for children in grades 1 and 2 and a parent. At this FJE families are introduced to the Ten Commandments and what they mean to us in our daily lives. Watch the mail for your special invitation!

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Souper Bowl of caring involves children and youth across the nation working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game.

St. Philip's is joining in that fight against hunger. This year the Super Bowl will be played on Sunday, February

2. To help prepare for the SOUPER Bowl, St. Philip's will collect cans of soup January 26 & February 2. Our goal is to collect 500 cans. Please help us in our fight against hunger by donating cans of soup! ♦



Global Missions Update

Partners in Ministry

Global Mission Festival

January 18-19, 2014

Worship: A slideshow highlights the ministry of our partners in Japan, Pastor Jim and Carol Sack.

Mission Offering:

- We support the Sack's in Japan through Missionary Sponsorship
- We continue support for our Companion Congregation in Bille, Nigeria. St. Philip's offering provides salaries for an evangelist and two nursery school teachers' aids, and gives scholarships to secondary students.

Adult Forum "Mission Work Progresses Into the 21st Century"

A look at changes in how mission work is done, from the 1930's to the present. Member Jim Hougen will give insights into how the ELCA relates to churches in other countries, noting transitions over the past 80 years.

- Points of reference include mission involvement of:
- His parents-in-law in South Africa in the 1930's to 1950's;
- His own experience in Brazil in the 1960's and 1970's;
- St. Philip's missionary sponsorship in Cameroon in the 1970's to 1990's
- St. Philip's missionary sponsorship in Japan from 1996 to the present
- St. Philip's companion congregation relationship in Nigeria since 2005

Refreshments: Served in the narthex and chapel. ♦

Plan to join in celebrating our global mission involvement.

Travel to Nigeria

Are you interested in visiting St.. Philip's Companion Congregation in Bille, Nigeria? Two members of the congregation are signed up for 2014. If interested in being an alternate or participating in a future trip, you may sign up with the Global Mission Team.

Brian Schroeder and Smiley Brandt plan to represent St.. Philip's on the trip planned for the fall of 2014. They had planned to travel to Nigeria in 2013, but the trip, sponsored by the Minneapolis Area Synod, was cancelled. Future trips will enable St.. Philip's to enrich its relationship with Bille. For information or to express your interest contact team members: Pastor Jan, Dana Rebelein, Phyllis Ehlers, Ken Moxness, Jim Hougen, JoAnn Kaye. ♦

Pastor Missionary Ronald Nelson (Ret.)

Returns to Africa Pastor Ronald Nelson (Ret.) departed Fargo, N.D., October 28, on his way to Africa for a four month teaching and engineering stay in the Republic of Cameroon. Unconfirmed reports were that he is to, first, participate in Pan African Fulani Christian convention (mostly former adherents of Islam), secondly, provide technical support services at the N'goundere Lutheran broadcast studio, and, lastly, teach Fulani language and/or customs at a Cameroun University in the northern part of that country.

Pastor Ronald Nelson (and wife, Ruth) were missionaries sponsored by St. Philip's Lutheran Church from the 1970's into the 1990's while they were serving in the Cameroon before their retirement. When not in Africa, Pastor Nelson, a former Electrical Engineer and Luther Seminary graduate, resides in Hettinger, North Dakota. His wife, Ruth, died not too many years ago. ♦

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now."

~Philippians 1:3-5

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!"

~ 2 Corinthians 5:17

Events & Opportunities @ St. Philip's

Thanks for Book Fair Support!

Thanks to everyone who supported the Library Committee and the recent Holiday Book Fair. The Committee greatly appreciates all purchases, with special appreciation to those who purchased a book and donated it to the Library. Thanks also to anyone who helped in any way with the successful sale. As always, our partner in this venture, The Red Balloon Bookshop, was outstanding to work with. ♦

55+ Retirees: Lunch & World Champion Accordionist January 9 @ Noon

Plan to join us in Fellowship Hall for lunch followed by entertainment by Leonard "Skeets" Langley, a World Champion Accordionist. He is a great entertainer and can play almost anything! His performance is 65% music and 35% storytelling/comedy. Beef stew will be served for lunch. The cost of only \$10.00 per person includes lunch and entertainment. Sign up and pay in the church office by Sunday, January 5. ♦

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch will meet next on February 6 (the first Thursday of every-other month) at 1:00 pm. We have decided to make the Old Country Buffet (6540 University Ave., in the Holly Shopping Center) our gathering place. We will meet in the party room. The Senior Citizen discount of \$7.99 doesn't begin before 1:00 pm. This is a great way to connect with one another and the camaraderie is great. Hope to see you there! ♦

Thank You

Thank you for all the thoughts, prayers, and cards I received after my surgery and as I'm recovering.

Your friendships are a source of strength for me and deeply appreciated.
~ Sylvia Strand

Yoga Begins Again in January

Sue Montague, CYT, RYT, will teach Christian Yoga classes at St. Philip's in the Lounge. Monday @1:30 chair yoga 1/6 - 3/10 (no class on 1/20)— \$40 for 8 of 9 weeks or \$5 per time. Monday @ 5:50 pm, 1/6 - 3/10 (no class on 1/20)—One-hour class is appropriate for all levels. Cost is \$50 for 8 of 9 classes (\$7 per session). Drop-ins always welcome!

Feel free to contact Sue at 612.532.4682 or 763.432.3449 or Becky Becker, 763.913.4059 with any questions you may have. ♦

55+ Retirees: "Showtime Gals" Musical & Dessert

February 13 @ 1:30 pm
Enjoy a fun, toe tapping afternoon! "Showtime Gals" are a volunteer group of 22 vivacious ladies who have been together since 2005 performing over 75 charity events throughout the Twin Cities.

The Showtime Gals will be "kicking up their heels" in our Sanctuary as they celebrate "Music from the Times of Your Lives". In lieu of payment, the "Showtime Gals" request their fee be donated to the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf which we will do. Additionally, you have the option to bring food shelf items and/or a cash/check donation for SACA (Southern Anoka Community Assistance) on February 13.

Pie will be served in Fellowship Hall following the performance. Cost is \$6.00 per person. Sign up and make your pie selection in the church office by Sunday, February 9. For either 55+ event please make your (non-refundable) check payable to St. Philip's. Come alone or treat a friend!
Contacts: Schonebaums 763.786.2483 or Retzers 763.754.9559. ♦

Endowment Fund

What you have is nice ...

But it's better if you can share it!

Share your faith in the continuing ministry of St. Philip's with a gift to the St. Philip's Endowment Fund.

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you."
Deuteronomy 16:17

Gifts were received in memory of

Allen Harju, Gene Linstrom,
Donn Feigal, Ellen Langlois,
Doris Harju, & Karla Holmstrom

Additional gifts were made by

Bob & Becky Becker and by Roger and Marlene Sonstegard

to insure the continuation of St. Philip's ministry into the future. Thank you!

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Gift acknowledgement cards are now available in the office for you include when informing others that you have made gifts to the endowment fund in their honor or in memory.

Gifts in memory of someone, in honor of a person or special occasion, or just because you care should specify "endowment fund."

Packs of special envelopes for regular giving to the endowment fund are also in the office. ♦

## Life Events

**Baptisms:**  
Brynn Zbanski

**Sympathy:**

Marilyn Seeman upon the death of her husband Jerry Kermit & Fran Hollen upon the death of their son, Michael  
Rollie Zeller upon the death of his wife, Edna  
Dan & Carol Peck upon the death of their daughter, Linda Granrose

**Recuperating at Home or Hospitalized:**  
Gary Erickson

**Anniversaries:**

Dane & Dena Froland, 10 years, January 10  
Steve & Lynn Britven, 28 years, January 11  
Larry & Marie Teeter, 12 years, January 12  
Steven & Gail Olson, 23 years, January 16  
Roger & Sandra Goman, 51 years, January 26  
Richard & Loral Harris, 52 years, January 27  
Ronald & Marlene Hirth, 53 years, January 28  
Kermit & Frances Hollen, 54 years, January 30

### November 2013

|                | Budget YTD  | Actual YTD  |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Income</b>  | \$744,752   | \$679,268   |
| <b>Expense</b> | (\$742,628) | (\$726,627) |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | \$ 2,124    | \$ 47,359)  |

*"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."*

~ Mother Teresa

*"I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy"*

~ Kahlil Gibran

*"Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."*

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.