

# Phillips Memorial Baptist Church

April 2021



Dear Members and Friends,

It is with mixed feelings that I announce that I will be leaving you at the end of May. Originally, I agreed to fill in for eight weeks for Dr. McKibben's medical leave. Unfortunately, Tom was unable to continue as your Transitional Minister and I agreed to step into the role. Then the pandemic hit, and all our worlds changed.

Serving as Executive Minister in the Rochester Genesee Region necessitated use of technology to keep in touch with the 48 congregations which were spread across 11 states coast to coast. Those skills made me the right person for the church at the right time. In-person meetings were first prohibited and thereafter the guidelines prevented us to safely meet in the sanctuary. So, we became a virtual church.

We have suffered significant deprivation this past year. We have not been able to safely be with children and grandchildren who are at a distance from us. We have missed traveling, going to entertainment venues, and indoor dining. Many of us have not been able to work and others have been forced to work from home. Our children have struggled to keep up with their lessons, missing seeing their friends and teachers. Many for the first time in their lives have not been able to provide for their families.

Thankfully, now we see the silver lining of the storm cloud we have been under. As all nature around us comes alive, the gift of vaccinations breathe new life into all our lives. We come out of these shadows aware of hidden strengths for endurance. We come with new skills. We realized that it is kind of nice not to leave our homes for night meetings and that church never need be cancelled again because of inclement weather. Distance no longer prevents us from joining worship or Bible study in real time. These are the unanticipated treasures we have received.

As many of you already know, after 40 years I retired from active ministry in 2018. It was only my love for Phillips Memorial Baptist Church and my thankfulness for the nurture and support shown to me at the beginning of my ministry, which called me out of retirement to serve as your Transitional Pastor at this time.

Thank you for receiving me back and for the encouragement and love shown for what will be 14 months at the end of May. It has been a joy to be with you and to serve as your pastor.

I wish you God's richest blessing as you soon welcome your next Pastor. I am confident that you will show her or him the same measure of love and support. Living in East Greenwich I will not be far away; however, clergy ethics prevent me from serving in any continuing pastoral capacity. But know that you will always be dear to me.

God bless,



Rev. Alan G. Newton

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## Join Us for On-line Worship Sundays at 10:00 am

**Remember services are held every week on Zoom.** Click "Join the Meeting!" below.

Recordings of services are posted on YouTube.

Click for Zoom Phone  
Info

Click for PMBC on  
YouTube

Click to Join the  
Meeting!

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### Moderator

Happy Easter Phillips family! Celebrating the resurrection of Christ reminds us all God is the source of all our hope and grace. This resurrection spirit has sustained us through this pandemic and while we may not be able to worship in person yet, we have seen God moving among our congregation throughout this difficult time. I have seen members draw closer to each other, work together on new projects, and continue to support important mission work in the community. I would especially like to thank Pastor Alan for his unwavering leadership over the past year. His willingness to stay with us months after the timeframe of the initial ask passed shows his generous spirit and dedication to Christ's ministry. I know I speak for more than just myself when

I say how much I have enjoyed being challenged to be a better Christian by his sermons. I also would like everyone to know that the transition team has reached out to Executive Minister Harris and he has a possible candidate to take over as our transition pastor this summer that he would like to introduce to us.

The search committee and the reorganization committees have been tackling hard issues to strengthen our church. The reorganization committee is ready for the congregation to vote on new bylaws to help facilitate easier cooperation among ministry groups. I encourage everyone to stay after worship service on April 11<sup>th</sup> for a question-and-answer session with the reorganization committee. The new bylaws include a different approach to organizing church leadership and we would like everyone to have the opportunity to ask questions before the vote on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

The search committee has been making great progress over the past weeks too. Thank you to everyone who completed the surveys, we had a high response rate which has helped to inform the search for a new pastor. Based on the survey results and guidance from Executive Minister Harris, the search committee recommended, and the cabinet approved, recruiting a full-time pastor and using some of the endowment to pay for the new pastor's salary. This vote was taken with great consideration and with faith that rebuilding our church community with the new pastor will lead to a sustainable financial support soon. The next steps for the search committee include drafting the recruitment announcement and preparing materials that can be provided to potential candidates introducing our church.

The search committee and cabinet would like to share some of the comments received from the surveys. The responses received are not intended to discourage anyone but to open a dialogue within our church community so we can grow our strengths and make strides in overcoming our challenges.

### **Strengths**

- a caring congregation
- a warm of the congregation
- a giving church in energy, monetary to work together on projects (involvement both within and without the church family)
- a willingness to come together and “pitch in”
- a core group of members willing to work with the new pastor to regenerate the church
- diverse
- sense of community within church membership even during this time
- outstanding music ministry
- a core group of lay leaders sticking together during this time of transition.
- commitment to quality worship with a core of lay readers
- a facility located in a place with great potential for Christian outreach to the community
- sermons that link Bible issues to current everyday life
- an endowment
  
- one outlier's response – “the church has no strength”

## Weaknesses

- unwillingness to forgive and forget past issues
- tribal communication – there are many long-time members. Newer members may not know church history or understand issues
- people disagree too much on different issues
- divisions
- cliques
- may be that deep knowledge of the Bible may prevent our desire to reach out beyond our walls to help others
- the ways things “used to be done”
- highly dependent on professional clergy
- communication with congregation and church politics
- communication and conflict – issues and conflicts are dealt with in hallway conversations, on phone, etc., rather than with persons directly involved
- “same old same old”
- political views
- need to be more innovative in getting people to know who we are as a church
- a lack of each person’s knowing his or her distinctive value to the church – sometimes not feeling valued or appreciated
- aging demographic of the congregation that may be reluctant to make changes in a congregation that has retreated to small groups that don’t easily interact and know each other.
- lack of young families

This work marks the beginning of the journey to stability within our church and I look forward to working with you all in the upcoming month as we enter the next chapter at Phillips.

In Christ,

*Sarah Blusiewicz*

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### **Special Meeting Notice & Bylaws**

(emailed on March 19, 2021)

[Click for Special Meeting Notice](#)

[Click for Draft of Proposed Bylaws](#)

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## Treasurer

Fortunately we have a good group of faithful givers but we need more of them. You can join the group by sending your check to the church. Thanks to all who are helping and to all the new ones.

*Richard Pierce*

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## Board of Deacons

All,

The deacons continue with a busy agenda. Even though we have yet to be able to be back inside the building our minds stay focused on that goal.

This past month we launched a Bible study beginning at 9am before service. Attendance has been between 18-20 with lots of great discussion. We encourage you all to come join. We have also been discussing with Pastor Newton his upcoming departure from Phillips. We are very aware of the keen role he has played and are trying to highlight the important areas to concentrate on, prior to welcoming a new pastor.

Does anyone have an old laptop, not being used, that they'd like to donate to the church? We are in need of one to help us run 'Zoom' service when we're back in the building.

Do you have interest in helping run the 'Zoom' service? We have a few people who are very adept at doing it now, but would like to increase the number of people who would be available to help us.

As always, please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Also if anyone would like to help with being a reader on the 'Zoom' service please let me know.

*Jeff Damrad*

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## Board of Trustees

Spring has sprung. The trustees need help springing into action. Late spring early summer, once the painters are done and are not using areas of the church, we are planning a project where groups or families can adopt a room. A list will be provided of what areas need sprucing up. Our church looks a little dull (since it has not been in use). So please keep your eyes and mind open to the new project. Information will be coming.

Diane Steele

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## Board of Mission

We will be collecting food on Saturday, April 10th. Calvary Baptist will be very happy to accept our donations since they serve up to 300 families each month! Drive by 11am -12 noon on the Branch Avenue side of the church and someone will unload your car!

The Mission Board voted to send \$300 to the RI Food Bank. We are looking at other urgent needs in RI, and will continue to collect food for food pantries each month.

*Diana Litterick*

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"Constant kindness can accomplish much. As sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate."

*- Albert Schweitzer*

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## Sharing Prayer Concerns

Jean Lieberman's brother Tony Howarth, Dick Pierce, Sally Riley's friend Cheryl whose son died, The family of Sarah Blusiewicz's friend Julia who died, Rev. John Houlker, Rev. Steve Guilmain, Joyce Smith (at home), Steve Huntley, Lisa Elliot, David Fresch's friend Evan, Bonnie DerManelian's daughter Heidi, Rina Hopkins, Rev. Dr. Tom McKibbens, Sheldon Belmain's sister Judy Carver, Michael O'Conner friend of Caroline Belmain, Linda Liebrich's parents, Peggy Chatellier's brother Bill, Jean Manocchia's daughter-in-law's mother Linda, David Barber's colleague's brother, ABC Missionaries in lock down around the world, our shut-in members.

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I wish to Thank my brother Sheldon and Sister in Law Carolyn Belmain, and all of the church group for their devotion and prayers on my behalf during my time of need . Your support has meant a great deal to me and I believe made a huge difference in my recovery.

There are no words to truly tell you how much this support has meant to me during my convalescence, but rest assured ,that your good work does not go unnoticed .

So Many THANKS to you all and may the Good Lord continue to care for you all.

Sincerely Yours  
Judy Carver

## Daily Lectionary Bible Readings

I have decided that instead of monthly Daily Bible Readings I would provide you with an Internet link for immediate access with links to the Bible passages for each day.

You will note that, starting June 3, 2021, the daily Bible reading list has two series, complementary and semi-continuous. There is no right or wrong way to use the readings. American Baptist Churches USA have used either series. Some people like to use both series, reading one in the morning and one in the evening. It is generally better to read one or the other consistently than try to do both and give up because of the time commitment. If you are not sure which to use, follow the complementary series.

If anyone wishes to have a printed copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.

Here is the internet address:

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/daily.php?year=B>

Pastor Alan



International Ministries Global Servant, Glen Chapman ministry in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. May 5, 2015



Click for video: "Powered Parachute Ministry to the D.R. Congo"



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*Birthdays!*



Brian Argiro	April 1
Madeline Millin	April 1
Laurie Mokaba	April 2
Kathy McKinney	April 16
Melissa Day	April 17
Sheila Zambarano	April 17
Dekontee Soe	April 19
Joyce Carpenter	April 22
Karen Petit	April 24
Joan Johnson	April 27

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American Baptist Women's Ministries of Rhode Island  
invites our faith sisters and brothers to join us  
for our Mission and Service Ministry Day!

## “Plant Your Garden With God”

Saturday, April 17  
10:00 am

**Rick and Anita Gutierrez**  
will join us  
from their ministry location  
in South Africa



Join us and learn about Rick and Anita's ministry focus,  
which is to train local residents in gardening skills and raising poultry,  
enabling them to promote good nutrition and generate income.

They also lead local Bible Study groups within their communities.

An offering will be taken to support Rick and Anita's work in South Africa  
If able, please send your offering as a check made out to "ABWMRI"  
(indicate "Mission Day" on the memo line) to:  
K. Savasta, 38 Tucker Street, Chepachet, RI 02814

This event will be approximately 1 hour and take place via ZOOM.  
Please contact Carla O'Neill at [clgard44@aol.com](mailto:clgard44@aol.com)  
for the ZOOM link.

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