

# On the Spiritual Side

jarthur@buckscountyherald.com

## St. Philip's parishoners assist Habitat in Guatemala

Five members of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in New Hope and four of their friends and family members returned on March 28, from a week-long trip to Guatemala.

They there built a cement-block house in the tiny mountain village of Chirrija, working alongside the family who will own the house when it is finished, per Habitat for Humanity policy, and were joined by a trio of local masons.

By the time the volunteers left to return to the U.S., all major construction had been completed up to the crown of the four-room house. The home will have running water – a rarity in the area – and was built like a small bunker, the better to withstand the country's frequent earthquakes.

Hanley, of Pipersville, who traveled with his two nieces and was celebrating his 10th anniversary of making such trips, talked about what brings him back again

cent, bending rebar and mixing cement by hand," said Harbaugh, a parishioner from Buckingham.

"So it was hard. But as I tell everyone, I am blown away that we invested so little proportionally, yet were able to change the lives of [the partner] family forever. It was truly God in motion."

Philpot, of New Hope, noted that Habitat for Humanity's Global Village Program has been active in Guatemala since the late 1970s, constructing more than



Village children enjoy ice cream cones.

Photographs by Tim Philpot



The group's partner family: David, Catarina and their children.

Donations from St. Philip's members, the church's outreach fund and the community covered most of the cost of the building materials used to construct the house. Volunteers paid their own way to Guatemala.

Mike Farro, Bob Hanley, Gail Harbaugh, Tim Philpot and George Polliitt traveled from the New Hope church.

and again to work with groups like Habitat.

"Basically, you're embedded and living with local people, so it's a very special way to get to know a region or country ... You get inspired, going on trips like this, and want to do more of them.

"There's even a term for it: 'Habititis,'" he added, laughing. "We were working at 8,000



St. Philip's members and friends in the village of Chirrija, Guatemala.

50,000 homes in the small Central American country. His blog of the trip can be viewed at stphilips-goestoguatemala.blogspot.com.

Founded in 1976 in Americus, Ga., Habitat for Humanity is a world leader in addressing the issues of poverty housing.

Besides its work throughout the U.S., Habitat is active throughout the Americas, in Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, East Asia and Asia-Pacific. To get involved or learn more, visit habitat.org/getinv.

St. Philip's Rector, the Rev. Michael R. Ruk, who has worked with Habitat in the same vicinity of Guatemala, knows firsthand how transformative such projects can be – for all concerned.

"Nobody comes home the same," he said.

For information about St. Philip's or its outreach programs, contact Ruk at 215-862-5782 or michael@stphilipsnewhope.org.

### Caroline Oakes: Mind and Spirit

## Staying in touch with wonder and wisdom in the digital age

There is a funny scene in the new film, "While We're Young," in which four people who are out for dinner together are unable to recall the name of a particular culinary delight.

Josh, played by Ben Stiller, pulls out his smart-phone and says, "Well, let's just look it up!" to which Jamie, played by Adam Driver, puts his hand up and says, "No, no, wait ... Let's not look it up."

The three others look at him, perplexed. Jamie then says, "No, seriously: Let's not know what some-

thing is."

Everything stopped for a long second or two, after which the movie audience chuckled in self-recognition right along with the four people in the film sitting around the dinner table, all collectively realizing to what extent we've become accustomed to having (and retrieving) knowledge at our fingertips.

"Let's not know what something is" is a quintessentially counter-cultural statement in this digital age.

With the world's knowledge literally in the palm of our hands, it is

almost impossible to intentionally not know something.

And yet, as a young friend of mine, just out of college, said wisely, "As great as smart phones are, sometimes they do take away the wonder."

Eckhart Tolle, wisdom teacher and author of "The Power of Now," would agree. At a recent Google forum titled "Living with Meaning, Purpose and Wisdom in the Digital Age," Tolle said the following:

"When the mind gets bombarded with an excess of input, you begin to derive your identity from the

thoughts in your head. You miss something that is essential for a human life to be truly fulfilled, and that is the place of stillness, of presence, the place that one could describe as the source of all intelligence. To have a truly creative insight, you have to go to that place that is deeper than analytical thinking."

Tolle offers several simple "entry points" to the creative space he speaks of, including this "mini-meditation" for people who don't meditate: Stop right now and experience the sense of aliveness you

feel inside yourself in this very moment. Then, occasionally, throughout the day, and especially when staring at a screen, return to that inner sense of aliveness.

"You need to go to the place where creativity arises," Tolle says. "Every human being has some access to that place, even if they don't know it."

Caroline Oakes, a Bucks County resident, has a master's degree in Practical Theology and leads spiritual practice seminars and workshops in the Philadelphia region. oakes.caroline@gmail.com

## St. Philip's hosts Celtic Spirituality Weekend

Musician-composer-contemplative Macushla leads a weekend of Celtic music, prayer and storytelling at St. Philip's Episcopal Church, 10 Chapel Road, New Hope, beginning Friday, May 1.

Macushla, also known as Stefan Waligur, has performed his music and led retreats in the U.S., Europe, India and Israel-Palestine. He lives in Ireland.

All of the weekend's events are free of charge; however, donations are welcome.

Events include: a concert at 7 p.m. Friday, May 1; a retreat, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 2; and Holy Eucharist at 10:15 a.m. Sunday, May 3. For information, contact the Rev. Michael Ruk at 215-862-5782 or michael@stphilipsnewhope.org.



Harmenaires

### Southern gospel sounds

The Harmenaires will perform Southern gospel music at Solomon's UCC, 2990 Bedminster Road (Route 113), Perkasie, at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 25. There is no admission fee, but a free-will offering will be taken. Refreshments will be served after the concert. For directions, visit solomonsucc.org.



### Quartet performs

Pyxis Piano Quartet performs as part of Doylestown Presbyterian Church's Celebrate the Arts, at 4 p.m. April 26, in the sanctuary, 127 E. Court St., Doylestown. Founded in 2009, the chamber ensemble performs to sold-out audiences up and down the East Coast. Inspired by forces of nature, the program will feature an array of music for strings and piano. A free-will offering will be received, and a reception will follow in the Celtic Cross room. For information, call 215-345-3531, or visit downpc.org.

## HAPPENINGS

### St. Martin's provides food and fellowship

The St. Martin of Tours' Parish Café serves a free, hearty lunch with an Italian-themed menu for community friends and neighbors from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday April 25.

All are invited to attend and join in for good food and fellowship.

St. Martin of Tours is located at 1 Riverstone Circle, New Hope.

The lunch is sponsored by the St. Martin's Men's Group.

### St. Martin's hosts teens-only concert

St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church hosts a concert by rock group, 3 Shades of Blue, at 7 p.m., Saturday May 9.

All teens in grades 7 to 12 are invited to join in a night of music and dancing. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Bring

your own blanket or chair. In case of rain, the concert will be held indoors.

Tickets are \$5 in advance or \$10 at the door. They can be purchased through the parish website or in the parish office.

For information, contact Gail Downing at youthministry@stmartinof-tours.org or call 215-862-5472.

### St. John's to bless bikes

St. John Lutheran Church, 1203 Pine Grove Road, Morrisville, hosts a Blessing of the Bikes at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 2. (Rain date: May 16.)

Motorcycles, mopeds, two wheelers, tricycles, tandem, recumbent, scooters, and even unicycles are all welcome. Bring along with your bike a canned good for donation to the ERA of BC food pantry.

For information, call 215-295-1603, e-mail stjnhelca@aol.com

or visit the church on Facebook.

### DPC offers Women's Worship Service

The Rev. Ruth F. Santana-Grace, executive presbyter of the Philadelphia Presbytery, will officiate at a Women's Worship Service at 4 p.m. May 3, in the sanctuary at Doylestown Presbyterian Church, 127 E. Court St., Doylestown.

All women are invited. Her service will focus on Esther, her wisdom and courage. There will be time for fellowship in the churchyard following the service. Child care will be provided.

Women's toiletries and beauty products for teens and young women living in compromised situations will be collected.

For information, contact the church office at 215-348-3531 or dpc@downpc.org, or Maureen Arnold at sea8golf@gmail.com.

## Worship Directory

**SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Sunday, April 26, 2015**  
*The Rev. Dr. Tyson L. Frey*  
**9:30 am Worship / Sunday School**  
**10:30 am Fellowship and Refreshments**  
**Nursery Service available**  
**186 E. Court St., Doylestown • www.DoylestownSalemUCC.org**  
**215.348.9860**  
**GOD'S LOVE EXPERIENCED AND EXPRESSED**

\*\*\*\*\*

To advertise here,  
 contact your advertising representative  
 at 215-794-1096

\*\*\*\*\*