



May 9, 2021

St. Philip's inSPIRE

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

God Is Talking to Us. Are We Listening?

by Jimmy Bailey



One of the hardest things to accept as a Christian is that God allows suffering to occur. We have all suffered in one way or another over the course of this pandemic, and sometimes it makes me angry, other times confused. If you believe God created heaven and earth, made man in his image, became man himself, died on a cross, and then ascended to heaven, then you have to

believe that preventing COVID would have been a cinch. I'm not qualified to opine on why God allows these things to happen, but I can look to the Scriptures for reassurance. The Bible tells us that the beginning and end of God's plan are glorious, but man spends all the time in between messing things up. I'm thankful we know the end of the story. Throughout the last 14 months, I've accepted that God has allowed this to occur, but I've often wondered what he wanted us to learn from this tribulation. What is he telling us, and more importantly, are we listening?

Growing up, I always hoped I'd audibly hear God's voice. My notion of hearing God was based on Bible stories such as when John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan, and "just as Jesus was coming out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased'" (Mark 1:10-11). Nothing like this has ever happened to me, and in my younger years I was kind of disappointed it didn't. I thought it meant God wasn't talking to me.

Fortunately, I've come to realize that God speaks to us in different ways, and we don't have to hear a big booming voice from the sky to hear God. In fact, I think God is always talking to us, but we are often too busy and too distracted to listen. We probably talk too much and listen too little in many our relationships, not just the most important one, which is with God. We are so busy thinking we can control life ourselves that we aren't listening for God's direction. While I don't believe he caused COVID so we'd suffer, I do think he wanted us to slow down, acknowledge that we aren't in control, and perhaps listen out for him more than we're prone to do.

First and foremost, God speaks to us through Scripture. The more time we spend studying the Bible, the more likely we are to hear him. Have you ever noticed that the Scripture you need to hear often surfaces at just the right time? I experienced this on a Sunday not long ago, rushing to town from an acrimonious meeting that included name calling and hard feelings. I hurried into the church, grabbed a bulletin, and read the Gospel reading for that day: "But to you who are listening, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6: 27-28). I'm certain God was talking to me in that situation.

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Working Hard to View God's Glory

St. Philip's Workday at St. Christopher

by Jason Ayers, St. Philip's Vestry

This past Saturday, nearly 30 St. Philippians met for another workday at the St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center on Seabrook Island. Since the onset of COVID, Camp St. Christopher has been operating with limited staff, unable to keep up with the landscape needs of this beautiful barrier island. Individuals, parents with their teenagers, and even one family of three generations all showed up to serve. Equipped with chainsaws, weed eaters, blowers, and mowers, we all set off in different directions to tackle the day.

I joined the chainsaw crew and headed to Kimbel Chapel for what I thought would be some easy limbing and pruning. However, when we arrived, we were told to cut everything from the chapel to the dunes. The problem was that from the chapel, we couldn't even see the dunes for all of the trees and shrubs that needed to go. Undaunted, we began to work. Chainsaw-resistant palmettos, gnarly pine trees, and briar-infested wax myrtles were all attacked. Some cut, some pulled, and some hauled limbs and trunks to a spot where another St. Philip's crew would then load and haul all the debris to a natural disposal site deep in the maritime forest.



We all broke for lunch on the verandah of Susanna's House for food and fellowship. That is, all except for Todd Brown, who was once again glued to the seat of a zero-turn mower. As enjoyable as the conversation was, we all returned once again to finish up. Pressure washing, road clearing, and more cutting and hauling still needed to be completed. In the end, we indeed cleared from the chapel clear through to the dunes. We decided to take a look from inside the elevated chapel to see if we had made a difference.

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Diaper Drive

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH LOWCOUNTRY PREGNANCY CENTER

This Week!

What's needed

- Diapers (especially sizes 3, 4, and 5)
- Wipes

Drop-off options

- May 3-7 at church office or preschool
- Sunday, May 9, at church
- Monday, May 10, 9:00-10:00 a.m. in front of the church office

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Working Hard, Ayers, *continued from front page*

Needless to say, we were all awe struck by the view—the dunes, Deveaux Bank, and the Atlantic Ocean were all clearly visible from the windows of Kimbel Chapel thanks to all of our hard work.

I left the workday thankful. Thankful God had blessed us with such a beautiful day—low humidity, a good breeze, and plenty of sunshine. Thankful we'd accomplished all that we did with no casualties—other than a stuck pickup truck (which we promptly freed). Thankful for the opportunity to get to know parishioners I'd never met nor spoken with before. Some were lifelong members, while others had only just moved to Charleston and joined our church.

At lunch we all discussed how COVID has changed various aspects of our lives. Thinking back, COVID has now indirectly brought me to Camp St. Christopher for two St. Philip's workdays, where a glimpse of God's glory was revealed. Sometimes we just need to clear all of the tangled debris from our lives to fully see it.

*View more workday pictures
at stphilipschurchsc.org/news*

God is Talking, Bailey, *continued from front page*

God also speaks to us through people and situations. A few weeks ago, one of the men in my Bible study shared that he had gone through an emotionally draining situation that resulted in a sleepless night, anxiety, and a lot of prayers. The next morning, while headed to work in a sleepy fog, a familiar song came on the radio, but it had new meaning and inspired him to minister to a friend. He said, "I know God speaks through us, and I don't know if he was speaking through me, but I felt I had to share."

I spent many months over the last year considering a career change. I confided in another Bible study friend on the various opportunities and my hopes, fears, etc. After nine years at my employer, any change, no matter how promising the new opportunity, would still come with uncertainty. After an interview with the CEO of a public company, I felt really good about it but still wanted to be sure it would be the right fit for me if I were to make a change. While reviewing the company's annual report later that evening, I was shocked (but thrilled) to read that one of their values is to "honor God with our efforts." I texted a picture of it to my friend and said, "Wonder if God is talking to me." My friend's response: "Well, seems like one of those knock-you-in-the-head signs to me." I took the job.

It is humbling to write an article like this for the INSPIRE, as I'm not a biblical scholar and I'm definitely a sinner like everyone else. However, I hope these examples will cause you to think about times when God was talking to you. More importantly, as things get closer and closer to normal, let's not get so busy that we forget to listen to what God is trying to tell us.

The Beauty Of God's Design: Sexuality and Marriage

by Jayne Gurley, World Missions Committee



In 2012, my husband, Tom, and I lived on the campus of Uganda Christian University, an Anglican university known as a "Centre for Excellence in the Heart of Africa." Tom had received a Fulbright Scholarship from the U.S. State Department to establish and equip science classrooms and labs in the newly constructed science building.

In the 20 years leading up to our time in Uganda, I had spoken many times to young audiences about God's design for love, sex, and relationships. As a high school English teacher and the mother of three daughters, I'd seen what was happening in my students' and daughters' peer groups—the culture of casual sex—and I was led to teach them about abstinence and about setting boundaries designed to protect and secure a pure relationship. When I placed the essentials for our nine-month stay in Uganda in my carry-on bag (my Bible and two sets of clothing in case of lost luggage—I'd learned my lesson the hard way) I also slipped in several folders of presentations on a Christian understanding of sexuality. Would African university students grapple with their sexuality like the hundreds of American students I had met and talked with? I would soon find out.

My experience in Uganda fulfilled two lifetime wishes: living in Africa and living on a university campus. We soon fell into a daily rhythm of classes, meeting with students, and teaching presentations. At the end of the day, we often walked down to the campus pitch (soccer field) to watch the magic of Ugandan football. Football is king in Uganda, from the capital city of Kampala, where children play with authentic soccer balls, to the bush (primitive countryside), where they play on makeshift fields with balls made of rolled banana leaves, stone, and twine. We would stand in thrilled amazement watching students play, marveling at their intricate foot skills, their swift passes to teammates, or their spot-on accuracy when heading the ball. It is no wonder these young men are recruited by American teams.

I met with the Rev. Amos Kimera, Uganda Christian University Chaplain, and his wife, Florence, telling them of my passion to communicate God's design for sexuality and marriage. AIDS, still a formidable disease in Uganda, infected hundreds each week. The message of abstinence with grace and mercy is greatly needed, and when young people learn of God's heart for their sexuality, the truth—in contrast to the messages they receive from western culture via film and music—resonates with them.

Amos and Florence invited me to their home multiple times to share with students after classes had ended for the day. There were 10,000 students attending UCU. My assignment was huge! I began receiving numerous invitations to share a scriptural perspective on God's magnificent gift of our sexuality. Invitations came from the student choir, praise and worship teams, the drama team, Bible study groups, dorm gatherings, young adult faculty, other UCU campuses, Anglican churches in Kampala, and more and more... Students began to ask for private appointments. In a very different cultural setting, where marriage traditions are vastly unlike our own, I listened to them struggling with the same longings as their American peers. I listened and responded, and we prayed together.

Florence invited me to the "Words of Hope" radio station on the UCU campus. Placing me in a soundproof booth with a microphone, she asked, "Can you speak for an hour on God's plan for sexuality? You will reach hundreds of families throughout Uganda, western Kenya, and South Sudan."

"Yes," I told her. "Please pray with me first." After an hour, Florence stepped back into the broadcast booth. "That was great! Can you talk for another hour?" I did. Whew!

When I was leaving the sound booth, five Anglican priests dressed in frayed suits and collars approached me. Because of the furrowed scars across their foreheads, I knew they were Sudanese. These scars represent their tribal traditional entrance into manhood.

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CALENDAR

The inSPIRE will be printed biweekly through September 12

Sunday, May 9 (The Sixth Sunday of Easter) DIAPER DRIVE

The Rev. Brian K. McGreevy, preacher

8:15 a.m. Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church

Ushers Richard Hutson, Howell Morrison
Greeter Heather Dawson

10:30 a.m. Childcare ~ Parish House (by reservation)

10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer: Rite I ~ Church

Check-In Jeff and Connie Rink
Ushers Team 8: John Blincow, captain
Greeters Polly Dickson, Cam Stuhr

6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group ~ Parish House, Parish Hall

Monday, May 10

10:00 a.m. Diaper Drive collection ends

Tuesday, May 11

9:15 a.m. Staff Meeting ~ Ministries Hall, Parlor

Wednesday, May 12

8:00 a.m. **Morning Prayer: 1928 BCP** ~ Chapel of the Good Shepherd

5:30 p.m. Wednesdays Alive! Holy Communion: Rite II ~ Church

6:00 p.m. Adult Choir Rehearsal ~ Ministries Hall, Parish Hall

7:15 p.m. C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, Brian McGreevy ~ Zoom

Thursday, May 13

7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Dana Heikes ~ Ministries Hall, Parlor

12 noon Rector's Bible Study, Jeff Miller ~ Zoom

6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study ~ Macmurphy Residence, Mt. Pleasant
Women's Bible Study ~ Gottshalk Residence, West Ashley

Friday, May 14

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Guv Gottshalk ~ Zoom

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Group Led ~ Ministries Hall, Parlor

6:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group ~ Parish House, Parish Hall

Sunday, May 16 (The Sunday After the Ascension)

The Rev. Jeffrey S. Miller, preacher

8:15 a.m. Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church

Ushers Briggs Huddleston, Burk Herrin
Greeters Randall and Linda Moyer

10:30 a.m. Childcare ~ Parish House (by reservation)

10:30 a.m. Holy Communion: Rite I

Check-In Reid Davis, Bob Kunes
Ushers Team 9: Cordes Ford, captain
Greeters Lawrence Hollingsworth, Elizabeth Bowles

3:00 p.m. Suzy McCall Celebration at St. Peter's in Mt. Pleasant

6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group ~ Parish House, Parish Hall

Tuesday, May 18

9:15 a.m. Staff Meeting ~ Ministries Hall, Parlor

Wednesday, May 19

8:00 a.m. **Morning Prayer: 1928 BCP** ~ Chapel of the Good Shepherd

5:30 p.m. Wednesdays Alive! Holy Communion: Rite II ~ Church

6:00 p.m. Adult Choir Rehearsal ~ Ministries Hall, Parish Hall

7:15 p.m. C.S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, Brian McGreevy ~ Zoom

Thursday, May 20

7:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Dana Heikes ~ Ministries Hall, Parlor

12 noon Rector's Bible Study, Jeff Miller ~ Zoom

6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study ~ Macmurphy Residence, Mt. Pleasant

Women's Bible Study ~ Gottshalk Residence, West Ashley

Friday, May 21

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Guv Gottshalk ~ Zoom

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Group Led ~ Ministries Hall, Parlor

6:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group ~ Parish House, Parish Hall

Sunday, May 23 (The Day of Pentecost)

The Rev. Justin C. Hare, preacher

8:15 a.m. Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church

Usher Douglas Sass
Greeter Heather Dawson

10:30 a.m. Childcare ~ Parish House (by reservation)

10:30 a.m. Holy Communion: Rite I ~ Church

Check-In Jeff and Connie Rink
Ushers Team 10: Chris Osborne, captain
Greeters Kittie Mullins, Sara Forbes

6:00 p.m. Senior High Youth Group ~ Parish House, Parish Hall

A Celebration of Suzy McCall's 30 Years on the Mission Field!

*Sunday, May 16 ~ 3:00-5:00 p.m.
St. Peter's Anglican at "The Barn," Mt. Pleasant*



Please plan to join us for a fun outdoor gathering as we celebrate Suzy's truly remarkable life laid down for the sake of Christ in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, for 30 years! Through the life of this one obedient vessel and the power of Jesus, countless lives have been rescued, changed, and transformed.

Call (843) 442-9306 to reserve your spot!

While decades ago, missionaries would spend their lives on the field, the majority of missionaries now average seven years before returning home. Honduras is now Suzy's home, and many people do not realize that Suzy had been on the mission field for 10 years before the Lord gave her the vision for LAMB; she is the rare lifetime missionary. We at St. Philip's have been blessed to be the church that sent her out in 1990 and supported her all these years.

Preschool Summer Camp Registration Session 1: June 7-11 ~ Session 2: July 12-16

Open to St. Philip's Preschool students, members of St. Philip's, and the surrounding community

We are pleased to offer preschool camp for babies through age three! Two sessions are available (campers must have been born after September 1, 2017), and at each session, the children enjoy socializing while engaging in age-appropriate activities.

The fee per child is \$250, and campers do not have to be St. Philip's Preschool students to attend. Space is limited, with preference given for church members and for full-week camp attendance.



Visit stphilipschurchsc.org/events or call Lee Moore, Preschool Co-Director, at (843)722-7610 to register.

SAVE THE DATE

May 16 ~ Suzy McCall Celebration at St. Peter's Anglican

May 26 ~ Last Wednesdays Alive! service before summer recess

June 6 ~ Senior Recognition (Sunday bulletin, inSPIRE)

June 6 ~ Choral Evensong (5:00 p.m.)

June 7-11 ~ Preschool Summer Camp (session one)

July 12-16 ~ Preschool Summer Camp (session two)

WORSHIP INFORMATION

In-person worship registration:

[Visit \[saintphilips.churchcenter.com/registrations\]\(http://saintphilips.churchcenter.com/registrations\)](http://saintphilips.churchcenter.com/registrations)

Livestream link, printable bulletin:

[Visit \[stphilipschurchsc.org/news\]\(http://stphilipschurchsc.org/news\) on Sunday morning](http://stphilipschurchsc.org/news)

Questions about the calendar?

Need to reserve a room for a church meeting or event?

Contact Rachel Murphy: rmurphy@stphilipschurchsc.org

God's Design, Gurley, *continued from page two*

One priest stepped forward. "Madam," he implored, "we heard your talk about our God-given sexuality. Our young people desperately need this truth. May we take copies back to Sudan?" I looked to Florence. "Copies are being made for you now," she responded.

A few days later, I heard an insistent knock on the screen door of our veranda and a voice calling, "Mama, are you home?" Stephen, the goalkeeper for the UCU football team, peered in through the screen. He said he had a special request, and I asked him in.

"Coach Jackson is inviting you to come to the athletic office and talk to the whole team before practice about a Christian understanding of sex," he said.

A few days later, Tom and I walked down to the athletic office. I had asked Tom—no, I *told* him—that I really needed him to join me for this one! I wanted the young men to see what a dynamic, healthy marriage looked like.

Twenty superb, extremely fit athletes sat around a long, wooden table. Handsome, perfectly groomed heads all focused on me as Coach Jackson made introductions. They had come from towns and villages throughout Uganda and surrounding countries.

I know this talk inside and out, and I speak from my heart. I am passionate to reveal God's heart about His gift to young men and women! I reveal the enemy's strategy to use the beautiful gift of our sexuality as a weapon to destroy the wonderful man and the beautiful woman.

Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Standing in front of these young men, I was met with expressionless eyes. Young men with muscles able to flex and move like young lions sat as still as statues. Were they even breathing?

My voice echoed off the concrete walls as I spoke of God's intricate creation of man and woman. Adam's poetic utterance in Genesis 2:23 when God awakened him to behold Eve: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh ..."

I spoke to blank faces about the sacred treasure called marriage, of the one-flesh relationship given by God. I moved through the 12 steps of pair bonding outlined by Dr. Donald Joy in his book "Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God" and delineated the differences between men and women in attraction. With Scriptures, I share the heart of a loving God and how to set boundaries. Foremost, I share God's incredible love and His desire for them to experience the joy and mystery of marriage. Ending with prayer, I thanked the team for listening. They still maintained a posture of silence.

Hurriedly, Tom and I left and climbed the hill back to our apartment. I didn't know what to make of the total lack of response. My confidence shrank by the minute!

"It was a total failure," I told Tom. We were both puzzled and taken aback by the experience. A few hours later, in the darkness, another knock on the screen door. Stephen the goalkeeper again. I dreaded what he had come to say.

"Madam, the team wants you to come back and say exactly what you told them today. Do not change one word. We've never heard God's truth about sex before and we want to video you. We plan to send the video to all of the football teams at the other colleges and universities we play against."

A few days later, we walked into an athletic office filled with clapping and cheering! With notebooks and pencils, they recorded the 12 steps of healthy bonding. We spent time praying they would set a boundary pleasing to God, preparing them for strong, healthy marriages. I spoke into the camera to football teams throughout East Africa.

Afterwards, Coach Jackson said with tears in his eyes, "If I had only known this as a young man, I would not have messed up my life—and the lives of others." He was married with a family, but he still regretted the promiscuity of his younger years. Greatly humbled and deeply grateful, I was stunned with this outcome.

Later, we stood alongside the UCU football pitch watching a match with another team. Like cobs, the Ugandan deer-like national animal, these young men flew down the grassy field. They dribbled and passed the ball with deliberate accuracy, fleet of foot. As they flew past us, I saw their determination, their fervor, their passion. Lord, I pray these young men may have the same determination, fervor, and passion to reach the goal of sacred marriage.



We pray for the sick:

Elizabeth Boineau, Sam Chesnutt, Diane Christensen, Patty Cox, Sarah Fayard, Elizabeth Flowers, Mary Forbes, James Gettys III, Robert Gould, Steve Green, Harry Gregorie, Jr., Jonathan Hanger, Jack Howell, Clark Johnson, Denise Keranen, Joe Livesay, Connor Lowndes, Beverly Melvin, Andrew Nash, Deborah Pollak, Ed Riggs, Fran Sanders, Rose Tisdale, Mike Walsh, Carolyn Warlick, Lindsey Wing, and Charlie Yoho.

We grieve with and pray for:

The family of Jane Hawkins Lemon, who died on May 2.

We pray for our expectant parents:

Justin and Molly Hare, Tim and Liz Strickland.

We pray for protection for:

Becca Baird, Chris and Julia Beasley, Graham Blunt, Henry Clayton, Ben Colyer, David Daughtridge, Hayes Fair, Morgan and Mason Herring, Andrew Kane, Horry Kerrison, Charles Kirkman, Frazier Kulze, John Mason, Zach McFadden, Philip Middleton III, Jackson Miller, Ned Montgomery, Edward Pritchard, and David Scott serving in our Armed Forces.

We pray for our home missions:

Star Gospel Mission, Tricounty Family Ministries, Lowcountry Pregnancy Center, St. John's Chapel, and the Open Door Ministry.

We pray for our world missions:

Suzy McCall and LAMB, for the medical missions to Honduras, for ministry to victims of genocide and AIDS in Rwanda, for Water Mission, and the Global Water Center, and for St. Jean Baptiste, our sister church, and the schools in Haiti.

Collect for Sunday:

O God, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding: Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee in all things and above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings for Sunday:

1 John 4:7-21
Psalm 33
John 15:9-17

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH

142 Church Street | Charleston, SC 29401 | (843) 722-7734 | www.stphilipschurchsc.org

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday | 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Friday