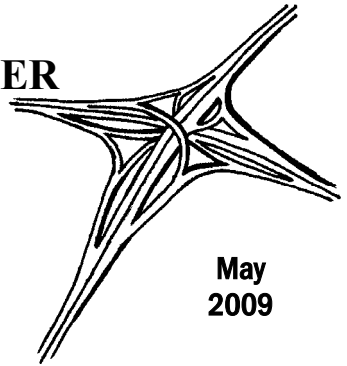




# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community  
in the Episcopal Tradition

## CROSSROADS



May  
2009

36 South Street, Morristown, NJ 07960 (973) 539-0703  
[www.redeemermorristown.org](http://www.redeemermorristown.org)

### MY LAST TURN.... Rev. Phillip Dana Wilson

As I think of these 22 years as rector of Redeemer, I believe that one of the most important things we have done together is to create ministries in this place to serve those in need outside of our parish. This valuable land in the middle of Morristown and the building on it were given to us in trust not only for our own enjoyment but to serve the poor, the hungry and the left out. The outreach ministries are the life-blood of this parish family and tell the world who we are and what we are really about.



We live with the Soup Kitchen most intimately, six days a week, with more Redeemer members involved than in any other activity of the parish. It serves tens of thousands of people a year. It is a living relationship that involves give and take and choosing to be inconvenienced for the sake of others. When we forget this, we neglect our heritage and calling as the people of God in this place.

One of Redeemer's first commitments in my rectorship was the conversion of the rector's home into an AIDS Residence and naming it after long time member, Eric Johnson, who died of AIDS. We gave birth to the House and the child is now independent with its own board and director. I would love to see us claim a closer relationship to the Eric Johnson House. They need board members and volunteers.

Four weeks out of the year homeless families, as part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network, come to live at Redeemer. A handful of Redeemer volunteers join with those of other churches to provide food, shelter and comfort to mothers, fathers and children who cannot afford a place to live in this one of the richest counties in the world.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Table of Contents

***This is a special edition of  
Crossroads honoring the  
leadership of Phillip and Susan  
Wilson as they leave Redeemer  
for their new journey into  
retirement.***

***May they go with the  
blessings of God  
and  
our love and gratitude!***



---

# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

***Mission Statement: We experience God as Justice among all people and as wholeness within ourselves. Our mission is to seek justice and wholeness for this earth and all its inhabitants.***

### Rector

The Rev. Phillip Dana Wilson

### Assistant Rector

The Rev. C. Melissa Hall

### **Church of the Redeemer**

36 South Street, Morristown, NJ 07960

(973) 539-0703

Email: [redeemer11@verizon.net](mailto:redeemer11@verizon.net)

Web: [www.redeemermorristown.org](http://www.redeemermorristown.org)

### **Sunday Worship**

8:00 AM—Holy Eucharist Rite II

10:30 AM—Inclusive Language Rite

Summer Hours 8:00 AM and 9:30 AM

### Music Director/Organist

Wayne Burcham-Gulotta

### Parish Administrator

Laurie Burkhardt

### Office Assistant

George Jordan

### Wardens

Gene Williams

Bill Primus

### Sexton

Cesar Torres

### Crossroads Editor and Designer

Donna and Jennifer Corrieri

**MY LAST TURN** *(continued from page 1)*

Also, little known to many of us, is the Literacy Volunteers of America, LVA, that teaches people, new to this nation, how to read English. The students come from Columbia, China, Philippines and all over the world doing the hard work to make a better life for themselves and their children. LVA rents space on the second floor of the Parish house and uses the entire building for tutoring. It is time for Redeemer needs to own this ministry and become more actively involved.

Ministries are not about charity. In feeding others **we** are fed. In giving **we** receive. Ministries are part of the “good news” **we** hold up in this place. Ministries are an active part of the “liberation” that **we** claim as part of our identity. These ministries give the gift of hands-on involvement in another’s life. They will necessitate sharing space, giving up control and choosing inconvenience. That is why they are called ministry.

I retire proud of the work we have done through the years to serve others in need. But, ministries take constant attention and recommitment.

Which of the ministries to serve those in need are you part of... or could you imagine being part of?

Shalom, *Phillip*

**REMEMBERING PHILLIP and SUSAN**

Phillip has always challenged me to think outside the box. In so doing, he has opened doors and worlds to me and I am the better person for having known him. Even before he was my Rector, he was my friend. Friendships as deep and full of joy are hard to come by and I will miss seeing him every day but know he will always be in my heart. He has been there for me through many deaths and joys and bumps in the road. What I will treasure perhaps most of all is the way he has opened up the holy to me.

Shalom, my dear Phillip.

Love always,

*Colleen*

We came to Redeemer because we heard it had an AIDS ministry. Our son, Tom, was sick and we needed support and courage to break our isolation. Redeemer, Phillip and the congregation saved us. At our new member meeting, we told why we had come. Ann Johnson said, "Our son died of AIDS." When Phillip says, "Salvation is finding someone who shares your situation," we know what he means. Just watching Ann and Bill do the ordinary things of life gave us courage that we could live through the horror of losing a beloved son.

Phillip has taught us so much through his wonderful sermons that will ring in our heads and be on our tongues forever. "Your devil is behind your hot button." "Change comes when the pain of not changing is greater than the pain of changing." "Let go of the rope." "People are doing the best they can, even when it is not very good." "Families are messy." Although we don't have biblical backgrounds, we have appreciated his insights and the way they opened up biblical history and truth.

We have shared our lives and our stories for more than seventeen years. We wish them a wonderful retirement, and we are grateful for having Phillip and Susan in our lives.

*Maggie and Walt*



When Cheryl and I were meeting with Phillip prior to our Blessing, I had shared the fact that I had been one of the many children who had been sexually abused by a priest. I asked Phillip if for our meetings, we could either not meet in his office, or he not wear the collar. I felt bold to ask this of him (still do), but proud that I could express it, and empowered by the experience of trying to state my need on this topic. On the day of our meeting, we drove up to Redeemer and there was Phillip waiting for us outside, wearing Dockers and a pink shirt. I have never been so touched. Phillip's sensitivity was overwhelming and will never be forgotten. Within this life, I believe that we encounter many angels. I believe that angels come when we need them and either light our way or at least hold us in the darkness. Though others may never have seen an angel or even know what an angel looks like, I do. My angel wears Dockers and a pink shirt. Thank you Phillip.

*Judi*

Dearest Phillip,

How can soooo many years have passed?? Wasn't it just "yesterday" that you arrived at Redeemer and a year later I arrived? From my first Sunday, I felt completely at home at Redeemer. Your sermons grabbed my attention, I felt like you were talking just to me. I heard everything you said and could relate to the message you were delivering.

You had a way of getting people motivated and involved, your enthusiasm was contagious. It was easy to jump in – I was a Lay Assistant, Reader, a Chalice Bearer, on the Soup Kitchen, did the laundry for the Hospitality Network, on the Vestry, Chaired the Pastoral Care Committee, went on church retreats, attended adult ed – remember Ruth McWhinney?

Then Carl came into my life. The months of dating and social life with our friends at Redeemer. Then our beautiful wedding at Redeemer. You were kind enough to put up the butterfly banners for me, even though it was the wrong time in the church calendar – I'll never forget that. Then babies and Baptisms of Alex, Zachary and Matthew. You use to pick my boys up after the service, plus Christmas pageants, Sunday School, Blessing of the Animals and listening your story sermons.

Even though lately we aren't able to attend Redeemer on a regular basis, we still think the world of you and Redeemer. Life gets complicated sometimes. Thank you for reaching out to us, respecting us and always making us feel welcome and special. Redeemer has changed SO much from my early days – thanks to you! You knew from the beginning the potential that lived in the old stone walls. You were committed to the dream and worked tirelessly to achieve it. Your invitation to "come as you are" created a loving and safe environment and membership grew and grew. People wanted to be a part of the new Redeemer, to support its mission and rekindle their own spirituality. You are the flame that fuels the vision. Redeemer and your accomplishments will continue after you leave but it'll never be the same without you. I pity the poor soul that has to fill your shoes.

We'll see you on the 7th and wish you every happiness in your retirement. Enjoy yourself – you deserve it!

Give my love to Susan, Adam and Zach – and a special hug to you my old friend.

Love always,  
*Carl, Cynthia, Alex, Zachary and Matthew*

If you had asked me 20 years ago if I would ever be connected with a Church or a Church Community, I would have thought you were crazy. I guess I had come to believe that there was no place for me in a Church. Then I met Phillip, and George. It was November of 1989 and I had completed the previous AIDS buddy training class at the Hope House in Dover. I had met Hal Maloney, Margaret Bailey, the Leidys, the Liotards and Ann and Bill Johnson. The Buddy Coordinator, Paul Harding, asked me to help with the next training class and so I was scheduled to facilitate the opening session and several additional sessions. I was a little nervous but felt prepared. As I looked out at the class sitting in a semi-circle in front of me, I saw this man in a collar and knew he must be a priest. Oh boy, I thought...I better mind what I say...he's probably going to critique my every word.

We began with introductions and as soon as Phillip spoke, I knew my anxieties were completely ill-founded. Some wonderful things emerged from that training class experience: I met and fell in love with George and Phillip became our friend. Phillip began to encourage us to come to Redeemer, promising that, despite our fears, the Church would not collapse. Our first service at Redeemer was AIDS Good Friday in the Spring of 1990. Having grown up Roman Catholic and remembering all those long and torturous Good Friday Stations of the Cross services, I was less than enthusiastic about going to a Good Friday service. However, I was immediately taken by how relevant what we experienced was to our present situation. This was to become for me the hallmark of liturgy at Redeemer. It wasn't about something that happened 2000+ years ago...it was about what has meaning and power in our lives today.

Phillip continued to encourage me throughout these past 20 years: to have a blessing of my union with George, to co-chair (with George) the AIDS Coalition of Morris County Inc. to begin the work of converting the rectory into what was to become the Eric Johnson House, to join the Vestry, to co-lead (with George) the Men's Group, to become a Warden, to Chair the Stewardship Committee, and, most recently, to co-chair with Colleen the Capital Campaign. In each instance, Phillip believed in me and encouraged me and as a result, I was able to grow and change and become more fully who I am.

Over these past 20 years, Phillip has been my priest, my pastor, my mentor and my friend. As my priest, he taught me that there is a place at the table for all of God's people and that God and Church are about setting people free and not about oppressing or marginalizing them. As a pastor, he has been there for me in the good times and in the hard times. I will never forget his comforting presence with me when George underwent his cardiac surgery. As a mentor, Phillip was always there to encourage and challenge and call me beyond my own comfort zone into areas of risk and growth. And as a friend, Phillip was always there to tell me the truth.

For all of this I say thank you Phillip...you have enriched my life in so many amazing and wonderful ways.

*Peter*

It was seven years ago that Brian and I came to Redeemer. It was the first Sunday of Advent. We were looking for a faith community that 1.would recognize us for who we were as a couple and 2. had a commitment to social justice. I had heard of Redeemer years before from a friend who was attending Drew Seminary. So we decided to give it a try. Phillip preached, and we were both blown away. Preaching free of pious God-talk! Preaching that spoke truth to power, that challenged the status quo; preaching that affirmed the goodness and worth of the individual! We had found a home. I will miss his straight-talk (no pun intended). What a gift to parishioners to be a priest who doesn't hide behind the facade of priesthood. He simply is who he is! He embodies everything Redeemer stands for ...wholeness for the individual and justice for the world. . And while I will miss him deeply, Phillip has given us a vision of what Church should be and it is that vision to which we are committed with deep gratitude to the visionary!

*Peter and Brian*

For all that you are. For all that you've done. For all that you have helped us become. Your journey here may be over, but your legacy has just begun!

*Donna and Jennifer*

We are very grateful to Phil for getting us back to going to church together!! We will miss you!!

*George and Karen*



I will miss Phillip's sermons and his special way of delivering them, making the lessons come alive in our everyday lives. I like how he explained what was happening at the time of the writings and how to interpret what was written based on that.

Phillip married my late husband Tom and I in 1997 and then sadly, helped me plan his Memorial Service just 4 years later when Tom died on 9/11. We decided to make the Memorial a celebration of Tom's life rather than a sad event. I remember leaving Phillip's office after discussing the plans for the Memorial with him and opening the door for a young couple who was coming in to meet with Phillip to plan their wedding. It reminded me of the circle of life and how temporary and fleeting our happiness can be. We must be swift to love and make haste to do kindness (did I get it right Mariah??) Everything is always changing in one way or another. There is always new life out of death. I will miss Phillip very much.

Sincerely,

*Barbara*



I am most grateful to Phillip for welcoming me into Redeemer, and for his guidance in my spiritual growth. I am a better person for knowing Phillip. My love and good wishes to Phillip and Susan as they continue on their journey!

With much affection,

*Lorraine*

Phillip, I am very grateful to you for leading Redeemer to be a place where I, as a seeker/questioner, could feel comfortable to attend and be spiritually nourished. I love to hear your sermons, and found resonance in the resurrection as "life growing in the broken places." I am always inspired by your courage to speak up for LGBT issues and other important issues. And I thank you for so readily getting behind the idea of Redeemer as a Peace Site. My memories are of you relating to the children, your sense of humor, and your stories. I will sorely miss you.

*Tricia*

Dear Susan and Phillip,

After so many years together at Redeemer, sorting through memories of each of you is an interesting task.

Susan, I will remember your wonderful art shows. It was always fun to attend and to see your latest creative work. I have enjoyed your art from the first clay piece from many years ago to the latest pottery. Your creative spirit will always grace our home. Singing at your mother's memorial service is another special memory. It was a great honor to be asked. And then there are the lovely, poetic notes you have written. They meant so much.

Phillip, my first memory of you is caroling the first Christmas after you arrived. I rode with you that evening and realized then what a special person you are and how fortunate Redeemer was to have found you. There have been so many excellent sermons from which I have taken so much. There was, of course, that one little exception when you told me, "Things die." Now that in itself has become a funny memory. There were also the meaningful wedding and blessing ceremonies, especially Karen's and Bob's, which you were good enough to drive all the way to Maryland to perform. And then there's the delicious food you have prepared, especially that potato salad which I'll never forget.

Then when I retired from singing in the choir, each of you spoke and wrote the most perfect words. There are so many memories from our shared experiences through the years. They will remain in my heart forever. Thank you for all of them.

With great respect, admiration, and love,

*Elaine*



We have known, loved and cherished Phillip and Susan in many ways: as generous and welcoming neighbors, as fellow travelers with whom we have shared travel tips and adventures, and as friends. During my years as a regular office volunteer, I (Anne Marie) found Phillip to be an entertaining, engaging, stimulating, stretching co-worker and colleague (never playing the "boss" role) and there was NEVER A DULL MOMENT when we worked together. In the aftermath of my father and mother's deaths, I (Doug) found great solace and understanding from my "chats" with Phillip, on a level that was both profoundly sacred and pastoral. And both of us have greatly valued Phillip as a leader and member of the Redeemer Partners' Group – always ready to connect, engage, and follow-up with folks. Phillip and Susan: our lives are richer for having known you these past seven years, and we wish you every blessing as you embark upon the next stage of your journey.

XOXO

*Doug and Anne Marie*



Dear Phillip and Susan,

When you arrived at Redeemer in 1989 you breathed new life into a dying church. Where others saw defeat, you saw possibilities. Some saw a church hard pressed to get enough volunteers for coffee hour. You saw an opportunity to involve Redeemer in serving Soup Kitchen. The Eric Johnson House, Hospitality Network, the House of the Good Shepherd all followed. You provided food for a Church body hungry to put religion into action.

I have loved seeing the growth of this very special place called Church of the Redeemer, a Christian Liberation Community in the Episcopal tradition. Thank you for leading me—sometimes kicking and screaming—into a new place as a child of God. Thank you for your friendship. God Bless as you move on to the next possibility—the State of Vermont !

Wishing you Peace and Love,

*Gail*

We are grateful to Phillip for marrying us and delivering a beautiful sermon that we will cherish forever.

*Jacky Abromitis  
& Kathy Ulisse*



I like Phillip well enough myself, but I really love him for his impact on my son Jake. When we have those rare "what if" chats with Jake and list the people he could turn to for help, he always interrupts us to add Phillip to the list. I'd like Jake to be a minister just like Phillip. What a way to leave a legacy.

*Betsy*

I am most grateful to Phillip for the comfort and support he gave our family when our son Christopher died. He came to our house in Hackettstown and helped us to get through such a difficult time.

*Barbara*

Phillip taught me how to be comforted by discomfort. He taught me to understand that confusion and pain are opportunities to grow. He taught me that God is good, all the time. He taught me that a family is any community of people who share unconditional love. For this, and more, I cherish Phillip, and I am eternally grateful.

*Joe*

We came to hear an AA speaker and found a community! We not only found a place where we would be accepted, but a rector who could only be described as “He gets it!” Your enlargement of the definition of family inspired us and made us feel welcome.

Thank you Phillip for all of the ways in which you enthusiastically reach out on social justice issues. Your desire for inclusion has created a safe place for all of us. There are countless ways large and small that you honor each of us and truly model spirituality. Your definition of God in people’s lives and experiences leaves room for everyone’s concept.

Your enthusiasm for the Partners Group and the dance kept us coming for 14 years. The commitment ceremony you did as your gift to the group seemed individual and special and the word “obey” never crept into the vows!

Susan – Thank you for being an original in your role at Redeemer. You emerged as a talented artist, a politically astute woman, and a compassionate friend, all the while being supportive of your husband’s high-profile career. Your commitment to Cameroon and the desire to provide materials for teachers and children is awesome!

There is a saying that” people are in our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime,” and you both are in ours forever. Your words, philosophies, compassion and love will be evident long after you have moved to Vermont.

Your spirit is in our soul, and not only have we “been changed for the better,” we have definitely been changed for good.

Namaste’ and love,

*Sue and Fran*

It was the Summer of 2007. Feeling alone and broken I found myself at a Redeemer Sunday service. I remember the homily being exceptional. When the Sign of Peace began I was shocked to see people leaving their pews. I felt frightened and on the outside. The priest walked right to me and introduced himself: "Phillip". I told him my name. Later I went up for Communion and Phillip actually called me by name: "Penny". I couldn't believe that he had cared enough to remember my name. Nothing like this had ever happened in any church I had attended. It was the beginning of realizing I had found a home.

*Penny*

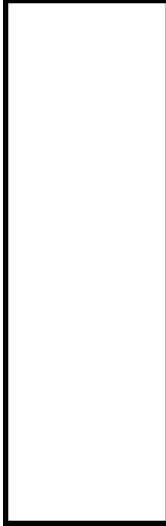


Phillip helped me find my inner strength and recognize my place on earth. He was truly inspirational to me and I am grateful to him and Redeemer for that.

*Stephen*



Church of the Redeemer  
36 South Street  
Morristown, NJ 07960



## Things to Remember ...

- ✓ Submit articles for next Crossroads by June 15th
- ✓ June 7th-Phillip's last day at Redeemer
- ✓ June 14th-Gay Pride Sunday
- ✓ June 21st-Beginning of Summer Hours
- ✓ June 21-Celebrating Men's Journeys

