

December 2023

The Pulse

Rocky River Presbyterian Church



Pastor's Pen

C.S. Lewis, the British writer and Christian author, wrote a book called *Miracles*. In that book he referred to the Incarnation, that is, God becoming human, as the “grand” miracle of God. The greatest miracle performed, in his mind, was the birth of the Son of God. Without the Incarnation, there would be no teachings of Jesus, there would be no miracles of Jesus, and no way for us to know the love of God as demonstrated in the perfectly obedient life of Jesus. Without the Incarnation there would be no revelation of the “Word became flesh,” and we would never have been able to know the one true likeness of God who lived among us as one of us.

Without the Incarnation there would be no atoning death of Jesus on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. Nor would there have been a resurrection of Jesus, the definitive act of God which conquered sin and death. It was only with the Incarnation of Jesus that God’s act of redemption for humankind could occur.

Think about how extraordinary the Incarnation was, that God “emptied himself” by becoming human and taking on all the characteristics of what that entails (Philippians 2). Jesus was fully human. When he labored in his father’s carpenter shop, his muscles ached at the end of the day, just as others who labored. When Jesus fell and scraped his knee on the hard surface, his knee stung with pain, just as it did for others who fell and scraped their knees. He was in every respect human and yet also divine, and that is a claim which no other religion of the world can make or has made: “The Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14).

Each year we approach this holiday anticipating the many traditions we have associated with it, and it is good to embrace them – time with family, time to celebrate and take a break from the responsibilities which consume much of our lives. Yet, we can never forget the pivotal meaning of Incarnation means for the Christian Community. Now is the time to remember and consider all the implications of it, that yes, this is the grand miracle!

Pastor Peter

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER:

DECEMBER 3: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this First Sunday of Advent, we will observe the season of preparation for Christmas. The sermon is called “Voice in the Wilderness,” and the text is Isaiah 40:1-11. We will also be celebrating the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper that day.

DECEMBER 10: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

This Second Sunday of Advent we look at the witness of John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way for Jesus. The Sermon is “The One Who Bore Witness” and the texts are John 1:1-9; 15 and Luke 3:1-9.

DECEMBER 17: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The theme for this Third Sunday of Advent is called *Meeting the Christ Child*, and will involve the youth and children of the congregation. The theme will highlight the many players involved in the Christmas story and the role they play.

DECEMBER 24: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent we will look at the life of Saint Nicholas, whose generosity and charity inspired the present-day image of Santa Claus. However, upon observation of the life of Saint Nicholas, set alongside the modern-day Santa Claus, one cannot help but see the disconnect. The message for this Fourth Sunday of Advent is called, “Whatever Happened to Saint Nick?”

DECEMBER 24: CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 PM

Our Christmas Eve worship will be *A Service of Lessons and Carols*. There will also be special music and contributions from guest musicians and soloists. Join us for the celebration of the “Word who became flesh and lived among us full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The message for our Christmas Eve Service is called, “God’s Surprise.”

DECEMBER 31: FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

The message on this First Sunday After Christmas is called “Wrong Sounds of Christmas.” Most of the sounds associated with Christmas are joyful, but the sounds described in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew are decidedly not.



MISSION STUDY TEAM:

The recently appointed Mission Study Team met for the first time on Monday, November 20, with the presbytery representative Sharol Cremeans. The mission study focuses on the preparation for the formation of the Pastor Nominating Committee. They will be looking at the vision, mission, values, goals, strengths and needs to discern God's purpose for this congregation. This critical work represents the next step in the process of searching for an Installed Pastor. Once the Mission Study is completed and approved by the presbytery, the congregation is then permitted to stand up a Pastor Nominating Committee. The members of the Mission Study Team are: Jayne Hoon, Greg Ahren, Kathy Bast, Karol Hoeffler, Annette Oberst, Lance Wilson, and Luke Zinda. Our thanks to them for willing to serve in this way!

Office hours for the Christmas holiday.

The church office will be closed on **Friday, Dec. 22** and **Monday, Dec. 25**. We will re-open Tuesday, **December 26th**.



****Please note:** Submissions for the monthly Pulse need to be in to the church office no later than the 25th of each month. Thank you!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



December 1	Barbara Prudhoe
	Susan Grady
December 2	Mike Matile
December 3	Jim Bennett
December 4	Karen Allport
December 6	Greg Ahren
December 7	Scott Krizman
December 8	Carol Bennett
December 9	Vic Erml
	Sue Chaney
December 10	Jeanne Frier
December 15	Paul Busby
	Sara Gresh
	Seth Purohit
December 17	Emily St. Pierre
December 18	Christine Wilson
December 19	Holly Pattison
December 22	Heather Daina
December 23	Bridget Hustek
	Cecelia Roche
December 25	Joey Furry
December 27	Brian Beer
December 29	Will St. Pierre
December 30	Wally Pattison
	Zachariah Carmack
December 31	John Magnus
	Halle McGorray

Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve at

5:00 p.m.



Christian Education Corner

Youth

Dave Hensel and I are happy to be together again with the Youth Fellowship Group. We have had some friends of the youth join us for our Sunday sessions. We welcome friends/guests anytime the youth would like to bring someone with them. If they would like to continue with us regularly that would be a blessing.

In November, the representative of the Youth group, Chloe Alvis and her mom, Aubrey assisted with the Alternative Christmas Bazar. They worked at the Cleveland Food Bank table. The Youth Fellowship and the younger Sunday school class shared their creativity in making homemade Christmas cards to be delivered to the homebound in our congregation. The mission work for December will be our Annual Mitten Tree! It will greet you in the Narthex as you enter the church Sunday mornings for worship. We are asking for donations of NEW mittens, scarfs, hats, and socks. The organization we will donate to is TBA. Please help us keep others warm and safe during the winter months ahead.



Hebrews 6:10: “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.”

Adult Education: Sunday’s 9:00A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

We are blessed to have Hal Mitcheltree with us for another fascinating program... “Spiritual Springboards / In Pursuit of Perspectives – The Quest for Other Points of View”. The Sunday’s will be: November 26th, December 3, 10 and 17.

Brenda Peterson
Christian Education Facilitator

Parish Advisor Thoughts:

In the symphony of life, your home is the stage and at the center of it all is the table- the heart. The sustainer of life and death. Just as you cherish and care for your dining room table,

tend to your heart with equal love and devotion 

Let’s make heart-healthy choices and keep the rhythm of life in harmony. Holidays are a time for gatherings with family and friends. This brings opportunities of many of choices of favorite foods and beverages. The key word is CHOICES! Observe the choices of foods, desserts and beverages. Then, decide what you truly would like to taste. December has 31 days...add in New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day... 33 days to be extra mindful of choices. Have some sugar. Slow down. Savor it, taste it, and enjoy it...just do not overindulge. Let’s be mindful of what we choose to nourish our mind and bodies with. After all, our bodies belong to God, but He has bestowed their care on us as a stewardship responsibility to glorify God in our body as well as our spirit.

Brenda Peterson
Parish Advisor

Who's Who in the Pew!

Say hello to Sam Mattocks!



Sam and his wife, Colleen, moved here from Virginia four years ago. Colleen had grown up on the west side of Cleveland and they decided to retire here. They have five children, eight grandchildren, and care for two of their grandchildren full-time, Tatiana, age 10, and Gregory, age 12. You may see Sam on Sunday mornings taking Tatiana to Sunday school! Sam grew up in Virginia, was raised Presbyterian and attended Second Presbyterian Church in Petersburg, Virginia. He has been attending RRPC for the past 1 ½ years and recently met with Reverend Lawson to begin the process of becoming a member. Sam retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserves after 27 years of service, and from working in the industrial sales business after 35

years. He enjoys staying fit, reading, and is a self-professed crossword puzzle nut! Sam and his wife also enjoy wine tastings and visiting B&Bs. Please plan on saying hello to Sam the next time you see him!

Stewardship 2024 Update

Expressing our Gratitude: We are so thankful for the RRPC households that have made their financial pledge commitments for 2024! As of 11/21/2023, we have received 50 pledges totaling \$241,494,04. If you have not yet made your financial commitment, it's not too late. As the Session and Finance Committees are finalizing next year's operating budget, **each and every single pledge** becomes that more vitally important in being able to meet even our minimum budget requirements. If you have not yet turned in your pledge card, please drop it in the offering plate (mark the outside of the envelope with the word "pledge") or mail it to the church as soon as possible. Thank you for your continuing support of the ministries and programs of our church!



Stewardship Committee

Christmas Gifts to Your Church: Flowers... In His Name.. Endowment

At Christmas time, we like to make a special gift in honor or memory of loved ones. Rocky River Presbyterian Church (RRPC) offers three ways to remember someone special. We print these remembrances in the Christmas Sunday bulletin.

The deadline for Christmas contributions is Dec. 17, 2019.



- 1) *Holiday Flower Fund* - Contributions to the *Holiday Flower Fund* provide plants for our sanctuary (suggested minimum donation \$10 for a plant). The RRPC Deacons' sanctuary decorating group purchases adequate plants for a tasteful display. Following the last Christmas Eve service we encourage donors to pick out a plant (there will be plants of varying sizes and styles) suitable for giving to someone who is sick, shut-in or needing a lift in spirit! (Added bonus: *Flower Fund* money remaining, after buying Christmas flowers, is used for sanctuary flowers on Sundays without flower donations!)
- 2) *In His Name (IHN) Fund* - This is a discretionary fund used by the pastor to address appeals for emergency assistance, special mission support and other unmet needs within or outside of our congregation. Donations to the *IHN Fund* may be in any amount.
- 3) *RRPC General Endowment Fund* - This fund is an *abiding endowment* which is never decreased. All contributions add to the fund and generate increased interest income for the church. Donations to the *RRPC General Endowment Fund* may be in any amount.

(Contributors to the RRPC *Holiday Flower Fund* may select a plant after the last Christmas Eve service.)

Name _____ Phone _____

Include payment with form. Designate: *Holiday Flower*, *In His Name* or *RRPC General Endowment Fund* in your check's memo area.

Fund	\$ Amount	Exact wording for bulletin (In honor/memory/celebration of...etc)
<i>Flower Fund</i>		
<i>In His Name</i>		
<i>RRPC General Endowment</i>		

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

We will be promoting the Christmas Joy Special Offering during Advent. This offering supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions for the Presbyterian Church (USA) as well as educational scholarships for students attending Presbyterian affiliated colleges and seminaries. Envelopes for this offering are available on the table in the narthex. You may also designate a contribution to this offering on your regular offering envelope. Also you may give online by credit card at pcusa.org/christmasjoy



RRPP to sell Mitchell's Homemade Ice Cream gift cards



The Preschool is selling Mitchell's gift cards from November 27th through December 8th. They will be at the church on Sunday, December 17th. There will be someone at the church on Sunday, December 3rd from the preschool to take orders. There will also be order forms in the church office.

If you are not going to be at church and want to order some gift cards, please contact Diana Wolfe at the preschool office – 440-895-5437.

ONLINE Scholastic Book Fair Nov. 28—Dec. 11

BRING ON THE BOOK JOY!

Give the gift of reading (Guaranteed Christmas delivery!)

Our weekday preschool is pleased to offer an Online Scholastic Book Fair this year. You can purchase books and other items for toddlers, children and youth. Your purchases also provides books for our preschool.



- ◆ Exclusives, new releases, value packs, and more. So many choices, all of them good!
- ◆ Everything ships right to your home. Free shipping on orders of \$25 or more.
- ◆ Ka-CHING! 25% of every online purchase during the Fair directly benefits our school! And 2% all year long.
- ◆ Where: <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/rockyriverpresbytriannsrays>

Teacher needed for January class at the preschool

The preschool is looking for a teacher for our Young 3's/Older 2's class, lovingly referred to as our "Littles."

The class will meet on Fridays beginning in January.

If you or someone you know might be interested in teaching this class, please contact Diana Wolfe at djwolfe@riverpres.org or call the office at 440-895-5437.

BECK CENTER FOR THE ARTS

PRESENTING

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT


STARRING IN THIS FABOULOUS PLAY IS THE ONE AND ONLY...

JON FANCHER

DECEMBER 1- DECEMBER 30, 2023



TICKETS ARE SELLING QUICKLY <https://www.beckcenter.org>



Join us for the 2nd Annual

CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE

December 3rd

Fellowship Hall, 11:30 AM

**Bring cookies to share with RRPC Homebound
and fellow parishioners!**

Questions? Contact Paula Clark

clarkpu713@gmail.com

Or 440-668-2715

Sat., Dec. 2 9:00 a.m.

All ages invited to help RRPC “Deck the Halls”



“Deck the Halls” is the morning we decorate the entire church for the Advent/Christmas season. This year “Deck the Halls” happens on December 2nd starting at 9:00 a.m. (We usually wrap up around 11-11:30 a.m.) Come even if you can only stay a short time. We’ll have juice, coffee and doughnuts and great fellowship! Questions? Contact Becky Ahren for more info.

SAVE THE DATE!

Immediately following the worship service on December 31 we will **“Undeck”** the Halls. Many hands make light work, so plan to stay a little while and carry a few decorations back to Fellowship Hall on your way to Coffee Hour.



How does the church know someone’s hospitalized? YOU tell us.

Due to privacy laws regarding medical information, the church is not notified when someone is having surgery, is hospitalized or faces some other crisis. Please share joys, concerns and sorrows by telling the pastor or by calling or messaging the church office.





DECEMBER 2023 LIBRARY LINGO

Mary Schulz, Librarian

DISPLAYS:

New books

Christmas books

I'm very excited to be able to publish the Library Lingo again! We have received many donated Bibles and Bible-related books, which you see below. We've also received many other books, which you will see listed in future Lingos. And, the budget has been restored, so I will be purchasing some new books!

It's been quite a while since I have been able to follow up on reminders about returning library books. If you know you have any that need to be returned, please do so when you can. I will be sending out reminders at the beginning of January. So that I know you received the reminder, it would be appreciated if you would respond to it even if you are not able to find the book. If an item is lost, we would also very much appreciate it if you could donate the replacement amount to the library, if possible.

NEW ITEMS FOR ADULTS:

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Book of Job

DICTIONARIES/COMMENTARIES

4000 Questions and Answers on the Bible

The A to Z Guide to Finding It in the Bible

The Applied Old Testament Commentary

Compact Bible Dictionary

Don't Know Much about the Bible: Everything You Need to Know about the Good Book but Never Learned

NIV Study Bible

The Oxford Companion to the Bible

The Parables: Understanding the Stories Jesus Told

Serendipity Bible: for Personal and Small Group Study

BIBLE STUDY

The Bible from Scratch: The Old Testament for Beginners

The Bible from Scratch: The New Testament for Beginners

The Bible: the Smart Guide to the Bible

NIV Study Bible

Serendipity Bible

HISTORY

The Bible Is History

Everyday Life in Bible Times

The Oxford History of the Biblical World

HAPPY READING AND VIEWING!!

(All descriptions have been taken from book jacket, title page verso, or review article)

December 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 First Sunday of Advent <i>Communion/Food Sunday</i> 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Mission Committee	4 7:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Christian Ed. Mtg.	5 7:00 p.m. Worship Committee	6 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	7	8 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom) 9:00 a.m. Senior Men's Group	9 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
10 Second Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:35 a.m. Evang. & Membership	11 10:30 a.m. Educators Roundtable Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Deacons Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg.	12 9:30 a.m. Expressions of Faith 4:30 p.m. HR Committee Mtg.	13 1:00 p.m. SUB Mtg. 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	14 11:30 a.m. RRP/Preschool Staff Mtg.	15 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom)	16 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
17 Third Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour	18 6:30 p.m. Women's AA Mtg. Christmas Dinner 7:30 p.m. Session Mtg.	19	20 10:30 a.m. Preschool Christmas Program 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	21 10:30 a.m. Preschool 12:00 p.m. Christmas Program 2:30 p.m. Preschool 7:00 p.m. Priscilla Circle Mtg.	22 Church office closed 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom)	23 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
24 Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour	25 CHRISTMAS DAY <i>Church office closed</i> 7:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg.	26 9:30 a.m. Expressions of Faith	27 1:00 p.m. SUB Mtg. 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour						

“The Pulse”

the monthly newsletter of

Rocky River Presbyterian Church

December 2023



For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is Christ the Lord.
Luke
2:11

Rocky River Presbyterian Church
Rev. Peter Lawson, Pastor
21750 Detroit Road
Rocky River, OH 44116-2220