

December 2024

The Pulse

Rocky River Presbyterian

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Pastor's Pen,

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low, and the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plane" (Isaiah 40:3-4).

The prophet Isaiah likens the preparation for the messiah's coming to the kind of preparation you make for the coming of a king. In ancient times, when a king made a journey from one location of his kingdom to another, the people receiving him were responsible for clearing the way for his journey. They were to make a straight road, "to make the uneven ground level." This meant literally lowering hills and filling in valleys.

The visual which Isaiah portrays contains lots of activity. We see people working together and working hard to prepare the way for the arrival of their king.

These words serve as a reminder that this season of Advent, the season of hope and expectation, is not about standing still and waiting for God to come to us, it is about actively moving forward, anticipating and preparing for God's movement. It is about seeking and searching for God's presence, striving to know God's will for us, and speaking on behalf of God in a world which often does not want to hear what God has to say. There is all the difference in the world between waiting and preparing. To wait is passive; to prepare is active. The word which the prophet uses to describe how we are to get ready for the coming of the messiah is *prepare*.

Some appropriate questions for us to ask ourselves during this season are, What piece of the road of preparation are we working on this Advent? Are we being an active player in God's redemptive work or a passive onlooker? Are we standing up for the things God wants us to stand up for, or sitting down? May the prophet's words inspire our thoughts and motivate our actions.

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER

DECEMBER 1: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this First Sunday of Advent, we will begin the season of preparation for Christmas. The message is called "Filled With Expectation," and the text is Luke 3:1-6; 16. This passage speaks about the fervor surrounding the ministry of John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way for Jesus. Are we able to capture that same excitement? We will also be celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that day.

DECEMBER 8: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

This Second Sunday of Advent, we will look at Luke 1:46-55, which is often referred to as the Song of Mary (Magnificat). This Song of Mary says a great deal about the kind of person Mary was and the faith she had.

DECEMBER 15: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Youth Christmas Program

DECEMBER 22: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent we will look at a man who does not get much attention in the Christmas story, and that is Joseph, the earthly Father of Jesus. Even though there is not much in the Bible about him, his actions in the birth narratives show a person of great faith and humility. The passage for this day is Matthew 1:18-25

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).

DECEMBER 29: FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

On this Sunday after Christmas we will gather in **Walker Chapel** for an informal worship service centered on Christmas Carols. More than just singing these celebrations of the birth of Jesus, we will also be looking how the carol writers were inspired to write them and how these carols have inspired others at critical moments in life and history.

Immediately following worship on December 8th we need

All Hands on Deck!

This year we will "Deck the Halls".

We join together to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas.

We can use help from all ages, so please plan to stay
however long you can that day.



And join us for the 3rd annual
CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE

(Happening jointly with the "Deck the Halls" event)

Fellowship Hall

Cookies to be shared with RRPC Homebound members and fellow parishioners!



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.16th 2024.

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.

THANK YOU TO THE MISSION STUDY TEAM:

Our heartfelt thanks to those who served faithfully on the Mission Study Team this year and produced an excellent Mission Study Report which was wholeheartedly approved by the presbytery. This report will be extremely helpful to the Pastor Nominating Committee in forming the profile of the congregation, as well as for the newly installed pastor once that person gets on board. Those who served on the MST are **Greg Ahren, Kathy Bast** (who served as the convener), **Karol Hoeffler, Annette Oberst, Lance Wilson, Kathy Roos,** and **Luke Zinda**. “Well done, good and faithful servants!”

THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS UP AND RUNNING!

At a special congregational meeting held on Sunday, November 24, the congregation elected the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee. This committee is the search team responsible for interviewing prospective pastors. They are: **Greg Ahren, Sara Gresh, John Kirchner, Dave Hensel, Marc Hustek, Emma Poole, Luke Zinda, Paula Clark,** and **Anne Busher**. When their work is complete, they will recommend a candidate to the congregation to be elected as the Installed Pastor.

COMMITMENT SUNDAY FOLLOW-UP: Thank you to all who submitted their 2025 pledge forms to the church. As of this date we received **56** pledge forms with the total amount pledged of **\$223,148.64**. We encourage you to turn in your form if you have not yet done so, either by mail or bringing it to church in person during office hours or Sunday worship.

2025 Offering Envelopes

As we approach the new year, it is customary for us to prepare a packet of offering envelopes for each church member (individual or family unit). We realize, however, that many of you do not use the offering envelopes and/or use a limited number each year and still have an ample supply. Given that, **we ask that any members that would like to receive a packet of offering envelopes to please contact the church office to “opt in” to receiving a mailed packet of envelopes**. If you don’t want to receive any envelopes, there is nothing further that you need to do. You may have also noticed the option to not receive offering envelopes on the 2025 Stewardship Pledge Form (opt out) – thank you to those that marked this - we are tracking these responses as well.

Any outstanding pledges or offerings intended for 2024 must be received by the church office no later than December 30 because the final count will be completed the morning of December 31st. Any offerings received after the final count is completed will be reported for 2025.





DECEMBER 2024 LIBRARY LINGO

Mary Schulz, Librarian

DISPLAYS:

Christmas books for children and adults

NEW CHRISTMAS ITEMS



FOR CHILDREN:

DVD:

A Charlie Brown Christmas

jDVD CHA

BOOKS:

The Word & Song Christmas Storybook: A Celebration of God's Gift of Love

j232.92 ELK

The miracle of Christmas, in this timeless Bible story, comes to life. Includes a 5-song read-along CD

God Gave Us Christmas

E BER

Little Cub asks Mama "Who invented Christmas?" So they head off on a polar expedition to find God. Along the way, they find signs that God is at work all around them.

The Christmas Story: A Lift-the-Flap Advent Calendar

E CHR

The Special Gifts

E GRO

Three men, all named Nick, meet in a forest, each with a special gift. They become friends and build a home together. Years later, they realize something is missing- they had forgotten the pleasure of using their special gifts.

Father and Son: A Nativity Story

E MCC

The author imagines how Joseph might have felt that first night with his very special son.

The Animals Who Woke Up for Christmas

E ORM

Just as the raccoon children prepare to hibernate, they hear about Christmas. With a lot of preparation and some ingenuity, the animals help them find a way to celebrate right in the middle of their long winter's sleep.

The Donkey's First Christmas

E PAR

The donkey is exhausted from carrying Mary on the journey to Bethlehem. He finds he is sharing a stable with Mary, Joseph, a cow, and more. Finally, he realizes that there is something extraordinary about the newborn baby in the manger.

The Coat

E VID

The coat is so warm, beautiful, and RED. It's all Elise has ever wanted. A chance encounter changes everything, revealing that the pleasure that comes from belonging is no match for the joy of helping others.

FOR ADULTS:

The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus's Birth

232.92 BOR

Two of today's top Jesus experts unearth the true story of the first Christmas. It's an interesting attention to the two genealogies of Jesus, and the use of Hebrew Scriptures as prophecy.

Christmas Playlist: Four Songs that Bring You to the Heart of Christmas

242.335 BEG

Four "songs" to add to your list this year: songs sung by a teenage girl, a respected priest, a group of angels, and an old man. Songs that take you to the heart of Christmas and can change your life, transform your future, and cause your heart to sing.

Shine On, Star of Bethlehem: A Worship Resource for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

252 SHI

Writers around the world joined to produce this anthology. It offers a wide range of worship resources, from simple prayers to complete service outlines. Voices of those who live in hunger, poverty, and homelessness are heard in this anthology, too.

Come Let Us Adore Him: Stories Behind the Most Cherished Christmas Hymns

264.23 MOR

HAPPY READING AND VIEWING!!

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

Preschool:

RRPP would like to invite RRPC to our Christmas programs in the church, they will last about 20 mins.

December 18th - 10:30 a.m.

December 19th – 12:00 p.m.

December 20th – 10:30 a.m.



Mitchell's fundraising, great for Christmas gifts, stocking stuffers or for you to enjoy! The gift cards will be delivered before Christmas. Forms are in the church office, forms, and payments are due December 3rd.

The Preschool receives 25% of each sale.

THANK YOU for supporting us with Butter Braids.



Blessed & Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the RRPP staff.

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 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



Come enjoy some holiday music performed by the Rocky River Community Band. The free concert will be at Church on Monday, December 9, 2024 at 7:00 pm. There will be a free-will donation after the concert. We look forward to seeing you there.



****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!**

Thank you to all that shopped the Alternative Charity Christmas Bazaar. Remember you can stop in office or call Colleen at 440-333-4888 and shop until December 24th, after the Christmas Eve service.

**Worship with us Christmas Eve
At 5:00 p.m.**



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.

SAVE THE DATE!

Immediately following the worship service on December 29th 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.



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

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.



Parish Advisor Thoughts :

“Tis the season to be jolly!” A season of many blessings, family times, delicious foods traditions old and new, festival of lights inside and out, presents under the tree, parties and travel. So many oohs and aahs in response to everything merry and bright. It’s a heartwarming and beautiful time of year. Sometimes we get side-tracked and need to remember the true meaning of Christmas, It is the birth, of our Lord and Savior. Let us remember to put Jesus first in our hearts and thoughts.

As we embrace this holiday with love, kindness, peace and joy to our family and friends let’s remember those who could use the extra smile, warm note of kindness, gloves to wear and a moment or two of your time. Giving is a gift and our time is the most precious gift we can give. Spending time face to face, video to video or making the time to shop for those in need will fill your heart with joy as well as theirs that you took the time to be with or shop for.

Respect those that may not be as happy as you. We never know what another person is going through. Providing space for them to listen, share a hug, hold their hand or just sitting next to them so if they care to share their thoughts you are there to listen with respect, no judgement, and please do not try to “fix” their concern, just listen. This is a gift and precious time for those involved.

Slow down, enjoy all the blessings those given and received, be mindful of the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of Jesus. Amen.



Christian Education Corner:



Sunday School: The children are enjoying their time learning about the parables that Jesus taught. They share their thoughts, sing and learn sign language to the songs they sing. In class they are also learning to work together, share, listen and the importance of giving to others. Currently, they have been making Christmas tree ornaments for those church members that are now homebound. These will go into the bags that are assembled with other items and then delivered to their homes. The smiles that appear when these members open their bags is deeply heartwarming.

Youth Fellowship: This group is continuing their studies on Matthew 25 and the lessons for us. Insightful questions and comments are thought provoking and bring the group together with engaged conversation. To follow through on the lessons the Youth group will be putting up their "Mitten Giving Tree" on December 8. Please help us fill the tree with warm items: hats, mittens, scarfs, and socks. These items will go to a local mission (Youth Group choice) that will distribute these items to those in need that they are serving. Last year we had over 300 items that were donated. What do you think we can do this year?

Adult Education: Please come join us for a wonderful Bible Study by Adam Hamilton, Incarnation. This is a 4 week study that uses a DVD and book. Book are available to purchase if you would like one. They are not necessary. However, it aids in bringing the study together. The DVD is shown in the class and then discussion follows.

No need to sign up, you can just show up on **Sunday mornings, 9-10:00 AM, December 1,8, 15 and 22.** We welcome you to the group an to share in this study by Adam Hamilton. See you on December 1 !

A note of thanks...

I am blessed and deeply touched by your unwavering kindness, support and prayers through my ankle/ foot surgery. Your notes of encouragement and get well wishes deeply touched my heart and soul. Thank you and please know how truly grateful I am for every one of you. – Hugs, Brenda

To the anonymous "church member" who gifted me with a bountiful box of tender, loving care. The food to nourish me, the blanket to warm me and other wonderful calming gifts of care. I am very touched and grateful for your thoughtful heart and gift. – Hugs, Brenda



December 2024

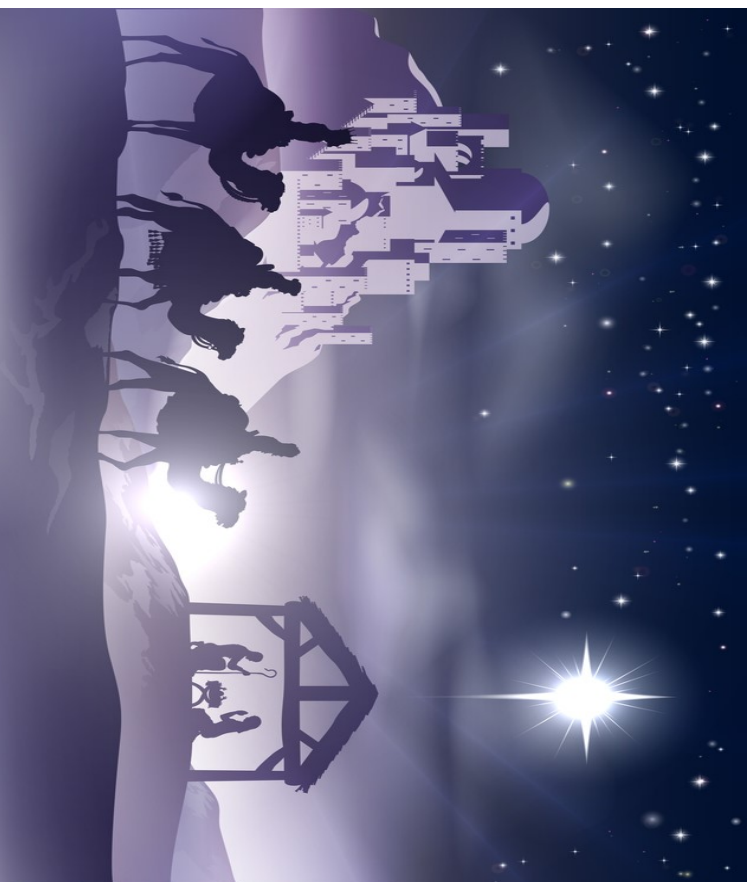
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 First Sunday of Advent <i>Communion/Food Sunday</i> 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m. Mission Committee	2 7:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg 7:00 p.m. Christian Ed. Mtg.	3 6:45 p.m. Worship Committee	4 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	5	6 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom) 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom)	7 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
8 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 6:00 p.m. Youth Fellowship	9 10:30 a.m. Educators Roundtable Mtg. 12:00 p.m. PW Circle Lunch 5:30 Community Band 7:00 p.m. Deacons Mtg.	10 9:30 a.m. Expressions of Faith 4:30 p.m. HR Committee Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Property Mtg.	11 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	12	13 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom) 9:00 a.m. Senior Men's Group	14 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
15 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	16 5:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg. Christmas Dinner 7:30 p.m. Session Mtg.	17	18 10:30 a.m. Preschool Christmas Program 7:30 p.m. Men's AA Mtg	19 11:30 a.m. Preschool Christmas Program 7:00 p.m. Priscilla Circle Mtg.	20 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom) 10:30 a.m. Preschool Christmas Program	21 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour 6:00 p.m. Youth Fellowship	23 7:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg.	24 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day Office is closed	26 Office is closed	27 7:00 a.m. Friday morning Men's Group (Zoom)	28 7:00 p.m. Altered Attitudes
29 9:00 a.m. Adult Education 10:30 a.m. Worship 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour	30 7:00 p.m. Women's AA Mtg	31				

“The Pulse”

the monthly newsletter of

Rocky River Presbyterian Church

December 2024



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