

## Rocky River Presbyterian Church

### FROM THE PASTOR

*Beginning on Sunday, January 18, and for the three following Sundays, we will be looking at excerpts of Jesus's Sermon the Mount, which is conveyed in chapters 5-7 in the Gospel of Matthew. This has been referred to by some as the Greatest Sermon Ever Preached. Here in these two chapters, Jesus reveals himself as the fulfillment of God's promise. Here, Jesus stands as the great hinging point between the old and the new. He says, "Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).*

*Just as Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, Jesus ascends this mountain to show everyone he is the new Moses with a new understanding of the Law. Notice he's not saying, "Forget about everything in the Law of Moses;" rather, he is saying, "There's more to being a follower of mine than just that." Jesus raised the bar on the Law of Moses. At times, it seems that Jesus is asking his followers to do the impossible. For example, Jesus says, "You have heard it said that you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." How are we supposed to do that? An enemy is one who, by definition, is one who we do not love. Then he goes on to say, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." How is that possible?*

*I believe Jesus is making these demands on us knowing we cannot, on our own, fulfill them. On our own, we cannot love as Christ commands. On our own, we cannot love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We can only obey these hardline commands when the power of Jesus is at work within us. Only Christ can make such a demand, because it is only by the spirit of Christ that we fulfill that demand. It was Jesus who said to his "enemies" while on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." I don't have the wherewithal to speak those words. Only Christ can, and it is only by the power of Christ that we can love as he did.*

# The Pulse January 2026

### WORSHIP IN JANUARY

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4:** On this first Sunday of the new year, we will reflect on the opportunities God creates for us in the different seasons of life. The text is Isaiah 42:1-9. The message is called, "A New Thing." We will also be celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper that day.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 11:** On this day, we will look at the call of the Prophet Isaiah as presented in Isaiah chapter 6. The text is Isaiah 6:1-8 and the message is called, "Knees and Feet." This will be an abbreviated worship service because we will be having an open forum discussion about the pastor search process. We will welcome Judy Mitchell, Acting Head of Staff of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve to lead and facilitate the discussion.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 18:** This Sunday we begin a four-part sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount. The first "Lesson" we will look at is from Matthew 6:25-34. The message is called "Why Worry?"

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 25:** This Sunday we look at Matthew 7:1-5. The message is called "Specks and Logs." **This service will be held in Fellowship Hall and the deacons of our church will be providing breakfast. The Annual Congregational Meeting will follow.**

## 2025 Per Capita

Per capita, which is a Latin phrase meaning “per head,” is how Presbyterians share the costs of being the Presbyterian Church (USA). Per capita funding has three parts:

- One part funds the **national** headquarters of the church, called the Office of the General Assembly.
- The second part funds the **regional** part of the church called the Synod; for us in Michigan and Ohio, that’s the Synod of the Covenant.

The third part helps fund the **local** part of the church; for us in northeast Ohio, that’s the Presbytery of the Western Reserve.

Each of these levels of the church figures out their most basic administrative costs and then calculates how much it would be if the costs were spread out evenly per each Presbyterian member - that’s where the term “per capita” comes from. Based on our membership size, our congregation’s share for **2025 is \$12,274.00**. Having to pay that amount right out of our budget prevents us from using that money to enhance our building maintenance, worship and music, Christian Education and youth fellowships, mission, etc. That’s why our Session is encouraging every RRPC household to contribute your annual gift toward per capita, which for 2024 is \$40.000 per each confirmed church member in your household. Simply mark your contribution “per capita” and drop it in the offering plate or mail it to the church before the end of the month. Thank you in advance for helping us fulfill our obligation to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## Pastor Search Open Forum

Following Worship on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, we will host an open forum in the Sanctuary to provide updates on the search for our new Pastor. We will be joined by Judy Mitchell, Stated Clerk and Acting Head of Staff for the Presbytery of the Western Reserve (PWR), who has also served as our church’s Liaison to the PWR Committee on Ministry. Members of the RRPC Pastor Nominating Team will also be on-hand to provide updates, lend perspective and address questions.



## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING :

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation for confirmed members will be **Sunday, January 25, in Fellowship Hall following worship. Worship will be in Fellowship Hall also.** The purpose of the meeting is to receive annual reports from the various committees and organizations of the church. The deacons will provide breakfast/brunch and will begin serving at **10:15 am.**





# **JANUARY 2026 LIBRARY LINGO**

Mary Schulz, Librarian

## DISPLAYS:

New books

Martin Luther King, Jr. books

## **NEW ITEMS FOR ADULTS:**



## **NONFICTION:**

### The Secret

131 BYR

You hold in your hands a great secret. It has been passed down through the ages, hidden, lost, stolen, and bought for vast sums of money. As you learn The Secret, you will come to know how you can have, be, or do anything you want. You will come to know who you really are.

### Be Happy: Remember to Live, Love, Laugh, and Learn

152.4 BEH

What really makes us happy? It isn't the big pleasures, it's making a great deal out of the little ones. May this little book remind you to open your arms as wide as possible to let them all in.

### The No-Brainer's Guide to the Bible

220.61 BEL

In this book, you will learn all the need-to-know basics about the Bible in plain language. A CD is also included which contains color photos of historical sites, links to web pages, and maps of Bible lands.

### The Lord Is My Shepherd: Healing Wisdom of the Twenty-third Psalm

223.206 KUS

The author discovers what the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm has to teach us about living our day-to-day lives. Each chapter discusses one line of the psalm in the context of both the time when it was written and the present day, and illuminates the life lessons contained within it.

### Praying Like Jesus: The Lord's Prayer in a Culture of Prosperity

226.9 MUL

The author calls us back to the true essence of prayer. He shows how authentic prayer will lead us away from the self-interest of the prevailing culture of greed, and move us toward the compassion, sacrifice, and love that are the hallmarks of the kingdom of God.

### A Book of Hours

242.2 MER

This book gathers together some of the most beautiful and insightful passages in the writings of Thomas Merton, arranged as prayers to be offered at the dawn, midday, dusk, and night hours of each day.

### The First English Prayer Book

264.03 FIR

In 1549, Thomas Cranmer published the first Prayer Book in English. Based on medieval forms of worship, its language is both sublime and majestic. Later Prayer Books produced by the Anglican Communion are derived from it. This new edition presents them in a form which is practical, accessible, and easy to follow.

### All You Really Need to Know about Prayer You Can Learn from the Poor

277.29 PER

This book tells of one woman's first encounters with the poor of the Caribbean Islands. She discovered that even the poorest of the poor have something to teach us- about faith, perseverance, and especially about prayer.

**HAPPY READING AND VIEWING!!**

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

Lance Wilson 01/05  
Beth Erml 01/05  
Maddie Dillon 01/06  
Harper Hustek 01/06  
Robert Murphy 01/07  
Dawn Gorman 01/08  
Emma Clark 01/10  
Hilary Watts 01/10  
Gretchen Koch 01  
Linda Esdon 01/12  
Joel Solak 01/15  
Melanie Fredrickson 01/15  
Charlie Wysong 01/16  
Lisa Watts 01/17  
Evan Jennings 01/18  
Rogelio Rangel 01/18  
Lyla Rangel 01/18  
Bob Davis 01/19  
Carol Jenkins 01/20  
Marty Heath 01/20  
Alaina Watts 01/21  
Susan Penning 01/26  
Colin Brown 01/27  
Sara Wilder 01/28



**\*\*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!

## **Christian Education**

[bpeterson@riverpres.org](mailto:bpeterson@riverpres.org)



**EXPLORE, DISCOVER AND LEARN at Adult Education.** We meet Sunday mornings from 9:00-10:00 AM. Coffee is provided

This month (January) George Gecik and Lisa Watts are facilitating a four- week session on “How Does Your Faith Affect Your Beliefs?” Exploration will center around faith, beliefs and how they grow and change throughout our lives. Without a doubt there will be lively discussion. Videos clips featuring Adam Hamilton, Brian McLaren and others will be viewed. Please join us for this intriguing topic. See you on Sunday, January 4, 2026.

### **YOUTH FELLOWSHIP:**

Those that were available went to the North Church on December 6 to help make up hygiene bags. We enjoyed the event knowing that we and the donations from RRPC were going to those who need them. They will be delivered to two large shelters and available to those who attend North Church if needed.

After the bags were filled and prepared, breakout groups formed to continue discussing what other churches are doing to help their communities. It was delightful to meet new people and share ideas on how we can collectively work together to help our brothers and sisters.

We are grateful for all the warm accessories that you donated to our mitten tree. Thank you for helping to keep others warm in these cold months ahead. We will be taking these to North Church. If there are ample donations, we may be able to share some with another organization.

Please mark your calendar for Shove Tuesday, (Mardi Gras) February 17<sup>th</sup>. The youth will be holding their annual Pancake Supper. Last year was a fun evening with food, fellowship, music and dancing. We had fabulous volunteers helping the youth with this. If you are interested in assisting the youth please contact Brenda Peterson. [bpeterson@riverpres.org](mailto:bpeterson@riverpres.org)

The youth group will continue to meet twice a month on the second and fourth Sunday of the month from 6:00-7:30 PM. We encourage them to invite friends.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** What can we say about our future leaders of the world!! If you noticed they run with excitement to get to Sunday School They enjoy participating in the lesson. Crafts are fun and creative. We have had a special visitor several times this month...Ms. Jill Hayman. She brought in her guitar so we could sing Christmas carols and other songs. We are very grateful for her time and gift of music. Thank you, Ms. Jill

## 2026

What shall it bring to us?

What shall we bring to others and ourselves?

Generally, many people start off the year with “New Years Resolutions.” They are goal oriented and many are short lived. We get busy, it’s too hard, I’ll try again another time. Our thoughts then wander to negative thoughts about ourselves. These are unhealthy for us. We treat others with compassion and kindness, why not ourselves?

Setting New Year intentions can guide you towards a more fulfilling and mindful year, focusing on how you want to feel rather than just what you want to achieve.

### Intentions vs. Resolutions:

Intentions are about mindset and feelings you would like to cultivate throughout the year. Resolutions often focus on specific goals or outcomes. Intentions allow for flexibility and self-compassion, making them more sustainable in the long run.

### Steps to Set Your New Year Intentions:

**Reflect on the Past Year:** Take time to review what went well, what challenges you faced, and what you learned. This reflection can help identify areas for growth and in the new year.

**Identify Your Core Values:** Think about what is most important to you. Aligning your intentions with your core values ensures they are meaningful and relevant to your life.

**Clarify Your Intentions:** Phrases like “I want to feel...” or “I intend to...” to articulate your intentions. This helps you focus on the emotional and experiential aspects of your goals.

**Visualize Your Intentions:** Imagine what your life would look like and feel like if you lived according to your intentions. Visualization can strengthen your commitment and motivation.

**5. Write Down Your Intentions:** Documenting your intentions makes them more tangible. You can keep them visible as a reminder throughout the year.

### Examples of Positive New Year Intentions

**Prioritize Presence:** Focus on being present in each moment rather than striving for perfection.

**Practice Daily Gratitude:** Cultivating gratitude can enhance your overall well-being and perspective on life.

**Embrace Self-Care:** Make time for activities that rejuvenate you, whether it’s through meditation, nature walks or simple pleasures.

**Foster Compassion:** Show kindness to yourself and others, especially during challenging times.

**Live Intentionally:** Make conscious choices that align with your values and desired lifestyle.

(continued)

By setting intentions rather than rigid resolutions, you can create a more fulfilling and joyful year ahead, allowing for growth and adaptability along the way.

### **Preparation for you to reflect – You are going to meet yourself**

You may want to purchase a special notebook or use a regular notepad.

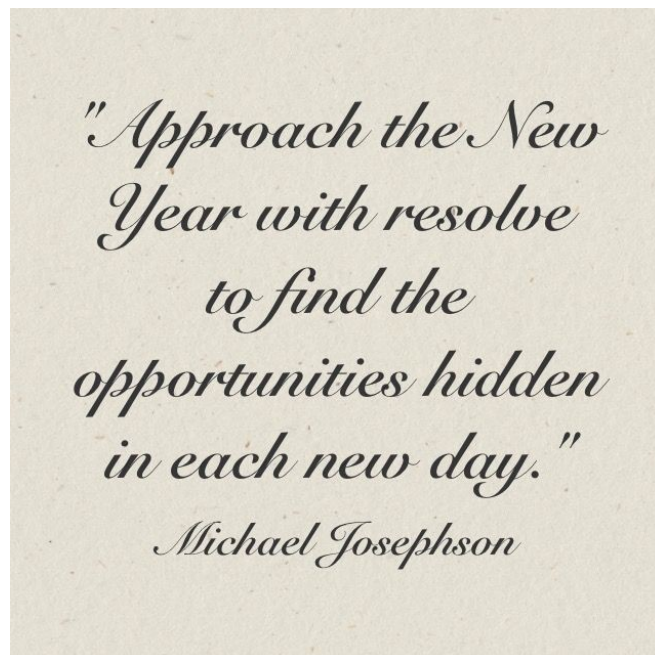
Create a warm inviting place that is quiet and cozy for yourself.

Ground yourself where you are at, mind, body and soul.

Work through each step slowly, with intention. This doesn't all have to be done at one time. Allow yourself time to reflect, acknowledge your reactions to your thoughts and make notes.

Carry this journal/ writing pad with you. You may have a random thought as you go about your day about what you want to enter in your journal.

Each day is a little lifetime – a chance to be fully aligned with love, awareness and grace.



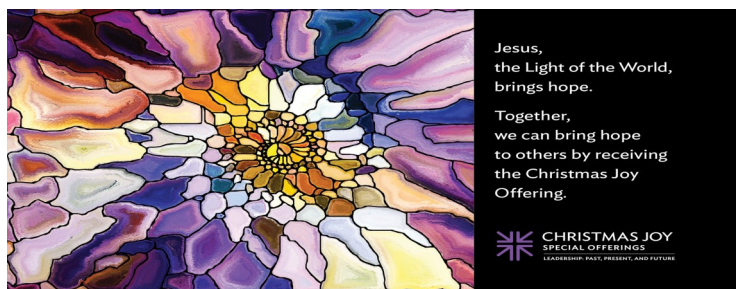


**COMMITMENT SUNDAY FOLLOW-UP:** Thank you to all who submitted their 2026 pledge forms to the church. As of this date we received **64** pledge forms with the total amount pledged of **\$259,720.00**. We encourage you to turn in your form if you have not yet done so, either by mail or bringing it to church in person during office hours or Sunday worship.

### **2026 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 2026 Stewardship Pledge Form (opt out) – thank you to those that marked this - we are tracking these responses as well.

**Christmas Joy Follow up:** Thank you to all who contributed to Christmas Joy this season in the offering envelope. To date we have received a total of \$1380.00.



**Thank you to all that shopped the Alternative Charity Christmas Bazaar.**

**Collected \$19, 920.00 for over 12 charities.**



**Friendly Faces Needed** Greeters are a vital part of a church's hospitality ministry.


Please use the sign up sheet posted on the bulletin board.

**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. [info@riverpres.org](mailto:info@riverpres.org) or (440)333-4888.**

# January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<div>1 OFFICE CLOSED</div> 	<div>2 OFFICE CLOSED</div> 7:00am Friday morning Men's Bible Study (Zoom) 9:00am Senior Men's Bible Study	<div>3</div> 7:00pm Altered Attitudes AA Group
<div>4</div> Food Sunday / Communion Sunday 9:00am Adult Ed 10:30am Worship	<div>5</div> 6:00pm Women's AA	<div>6</div> 8:00pm CE Committee Mtg.	<div>7</div> 7:00 pm Pastor Nominating Committee 7:00pm Worship Comm. 7:30pm Men's AA Mtg.	<div>8</div>	<div>9</div> 7:00am Friday morning Men's Bible Study (Zoom)	<div>10</div> 9:00am Pres. Women Blanket Making 7:00pm Altered Attitudes AA Group
<div>11</div> 9:00am Adult Ed 10:30am Worship 6:00pm Youth Fellowship	<div>12</div> 6:00pm Women's AA 6:00pm Deacons Mtg.	<div>13</div> 9:30am Preschool Board Mtg. 10:00pm Expressions of Faith 4:30pm HR Committee. 6:30pm Finance Comm.	<div>14</div> 7:00 pm Pastor Nominating Committee 7:30pm Men's AA Mtg.	<div>15</div> 7:00pm PW Priscilla Circle	<div>16</div> 7:00am Friday morning Men's Bible Study (Zoom) 9:00am Senior Men's Bible Study	<div>17</div> 7:00pm Altered Attitudes AA Group
<div>18</div> 9:00am Adult Ed 10:30am Worship 11:30am E & M Committee	<div>19</div> 6:00pm Women's AA 7:00pm Session Mtg.	<div>20</div>	<div>21</div> 7:00 pm Pastor Nominating Committee 7:30pm Men's AA Mtg.	<div>22</div>	<div>23</div> 7:00am Friday morning Men's Bible Study (Zoom)	<div>24</div> 7:00pm Altered Attitudes AA Group
<div>25</div> 9:00am Adult Ed 10:30am Worship 11:30 Annual Mtg. of Congregation 6:00pm Youth Fellowship	<div>26</div> 6:00pm Women's AA	<div>27</div> 10:00pm Expressions of Faith	<div>28</div> 7:00 pm Pastor Nominating Committee 7:30pm Men's AA Mtg.	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div> 7:00am Friday morning Men's Bible Study (Zoom) 9:00am Senior Men's Bible Study	<div>31</div> 7:00pm Altered Attitudes AA Group

**CLOSED FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**

In this cozy winter program, eight Apollo's Fire musicians set sparks flying in virtuoso works of J.S. Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, and more. Debra Nagy takes the spotlight in a lively Vivaldi oboe concerto, while Kathie Stewart and Alan Choo lead a fiery chamber performance of Bach's *Orchestral Suite no. 2*. Viola da gambist HyunKun Cho steals the thunder in Marais' famous *Sonnerie de Sainte Geneviève*, an imaginative showpiece evoking the sounds of church bells in Paris.

Featured Artists

Kathie Stewart, *flute*

Debra Nagy, *oboe*

Alan Choo, *violin*

HyunKun Cho, *viola da gamba*

Sunday, February 1, 2026, 4:00PM

Rocky River Presbyterian Church

<https://apollosfire.org/tickets/?id=sparks2026>



Thank you to those that  
donated Personal Hygiene  
Items for our November  
Mission!

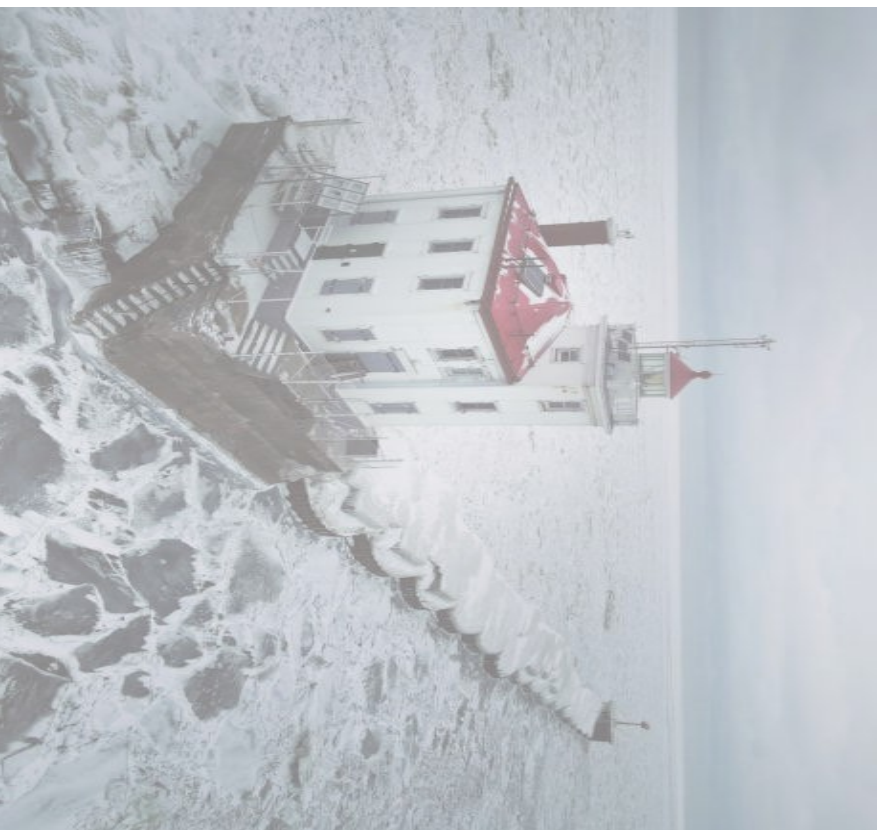
We had a great group to  
help pack and sort items at  
North Church.



# “The Pulse”

the monthly newsletter of

**Rocky River Presbyterian Church**



**Rocky River Presbyterian Church**  
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