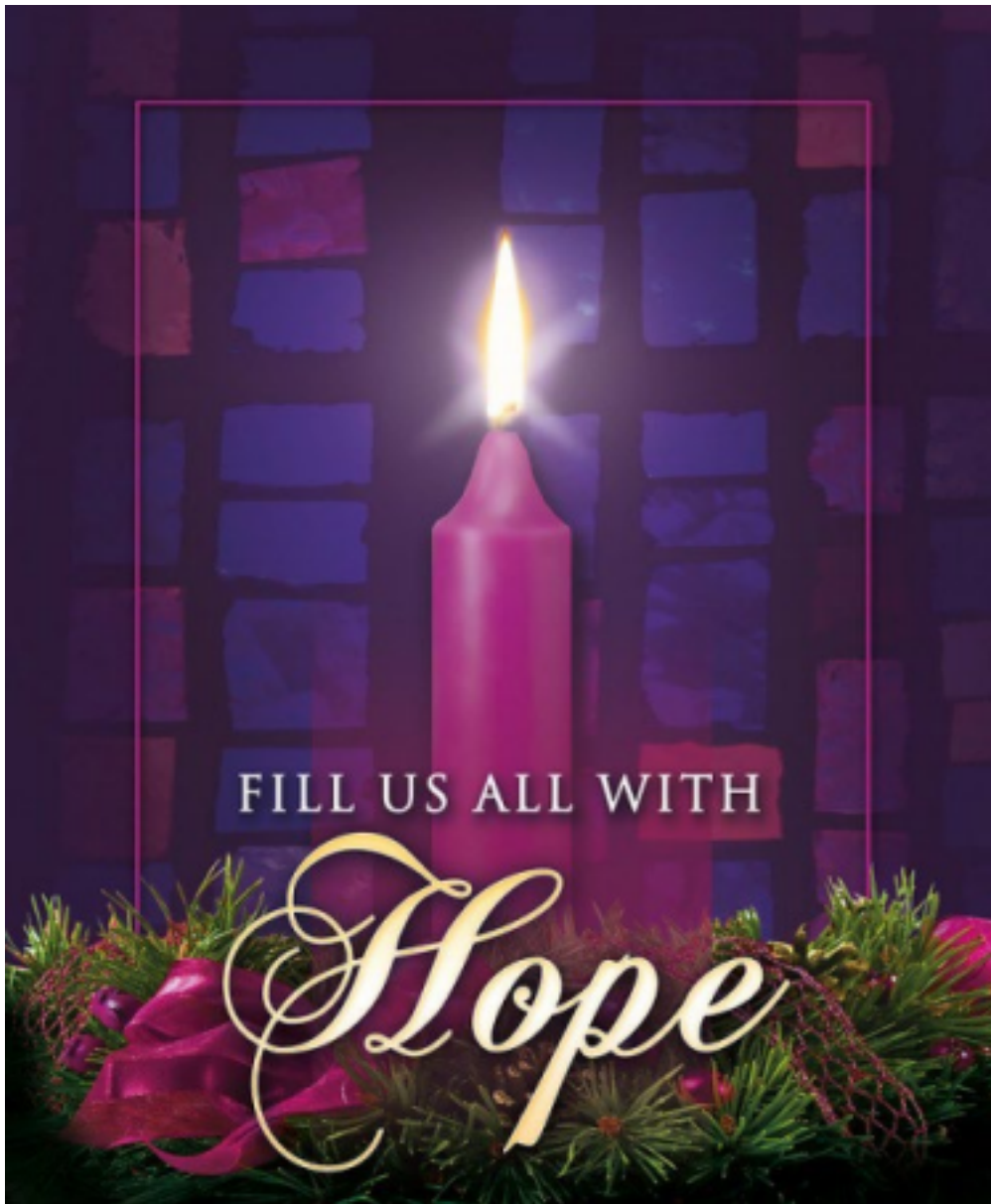


December 3, 2023
Rockville Presbyterian Church, Rockville, MD
www.rockvillepres.org



Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai (pronounced "Y" "N")

Lay Leader: Aimee Ranaivoarijaona

Ushers: Elizabeth & Paul Boyer

We are filled with joy at your presence and hope you experience God's Spirit as you worship and meet with those around you. If you would like more information about RPC, please talk with anyone wearing a name tag or the Pastor.

Bold Letters Indicate congregational response.

*-- Indicates that all who are able may stand.

GATHERING

Prelude

Christmas Breeze

Huai-En Tsai

Welcome

Lighting of Advent Candle

The Nouna Family

Advent prayer:

Faithful God, renew us in hope, that we may know Christ's birth in our hearts and in our minds, and in your world. Amen.

Advent Choral Response

Advent Song

STF#2090 (vs.1)

**Light the Advent Candle, one:
Now the waiting has begun;
we have started on our way,
time to think of Christmas day.**

Chorus:

**Candle, candle, burning bright,
shining in the cold winter night;
candle, candle, burning bright,
fill our hearts with Christmas light.**

Announcements **(See pages 6-9 in purple)**

Prayer of Invocation

Holy One, in this season of waiting, shower us with your spirit. As we journey to Bethlehem, we lift up songs, prayers, and scripture to you, oh Heavenly One. As we prepare for the birth of hope, we know that you are with us. We feel your presence. We know you more deeply. Amen

Prayer of Confession:

God, our Maker, we confess that we have all done wrong. Not one of us is wholly clean. We confess that we are not ready to meet you. We study the trends of our times and ignore the signs of your reign. We trust in things that pass away and forget your eternal promise. Forgive us, God of grace. Strengthen us, by your hand, so that we may be ready for that day when you are born to us again, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Have mercy on us.

Silence is kept for personal confession.

Assurance of Pardon

*Choral Response

He Came Down

STF#2085 (vs. 4, 3 times)

He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope,
Hallelujah forevermore.

THE WORD

Children's Sermon

Prayer of Illumination

Loving God, on this glorious Sunday, we ask that you quiet our minds, open our souls, and expand our hearts, that we may hear your Word read, spoken, sung, and proclaimed. Let us now fully devote ourselves to worship. In Christ's name we pray,
Amen.

1st Reading Isaiah 7:11-15

Ask a sign of the Lord your God;

let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. **Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also?"**

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

2nd Reading: Luke 1:5-17

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon Zechariah and the Angel

Unity Hymn

People, Look East

#105

**1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.**

**Make your house fair as you are able;
trim the hearth and set the table.**

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.

**2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.**

**Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.**

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Rose, is on the way.

**3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled.**

**Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.**

People, look east and sing today:

Love, the Bird, is on the way.

**4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Star, is on the way.**

**5 Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.**

RESPONDING

Invitation to Present Our Tithes and Offerings

Church offerings can be made electronically through our website:
www.Rockvillepres.org *or* by scanning our QR code with your phone.



Offertory

What Child Is This?

William Chatterton Dix

***Doxology**

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen**

***Prayer of Dedication**

You called forth this church and entrusted it to us, Great God. We bring our offerings to further your reign among us and only you know how adequately we are responding in return for the abundance you have given to us. May what we dedicate here, and the causes that engage our devotion, represent the life you bring to this church.

***Affirmation of Faith:** (adapted from The Confessions of 1967, PC, USA *Book of Confessions*)

In Jesus Christ, God was reconciling the world to God's self. Jesus Christ is God with man. Jesus Christ is the eternal son of the Father, who became man and lived among us to fulfill the work of reconciliation. He is present in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete his mission. In Jesus of Nazareth, true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of people. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

**Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

SENDING

***Sending Hymn**

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

#100

**1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?**

Refrain:

**My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.**

2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

Refrain:

**My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.**

3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn. (*Refrain*)

4 Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around. (*Refrain*)

Benediction

Postlude

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Felix Mendelssohn

PRAYERS & BLESSINGS

New to the Prayer list:

- ❖ Jeff Taylor (Bob Taylor's son) who has recently been diagnosed with melanoma.

We continue to pray for:

- ❖ Prayers for Barbara Grewe; Sere, Ruth, and Esame (Shaney), per Carine Nouna request; Susan's friend Ann who is receiving chemotherapy to treat lung cancer; Betty Harbaugh's, granddaughter Michelle; Bernice Brown's family members, Betty and Evan; Verlin Morton (Pastor Doty's husband).

Our Homebound:

- ❖ Beth McDonald (Landfair), Bill Landfair and Nancy Webert.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nursery Care: Professional childcare workers are available to care for your children during the worship service. They are CPR-trained and have undergone full criminal background checks. The nursery is colorfully decorated and stocked with age-appropriate toys, changing tables, cribs, and childcare supplies. Speak to one of the ushers if you need help placing your child in the care of our wonderful workers.



We'll have choir practices in the Calvin Room on the following Sundays, **12/10**, **12/17**, and **12/24**, at **9:15-10:00 am** as we prepare for Christmas. All are welcome and encouraged to join!!



Thanksgiving Baskets Thank you! – Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Thanksgiving basket collection. We filled 7 Thanksgiving baskets that were distributed by Community Reach to those in need.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Today, following worship - Deck the Halls! - Christmas is a wonderful time of year, we get to **celebrate** the glorious birth of Jesus Christ. In preparation for that day, stick around after church on this first day of Advent and help us deck the halls and make our church beautiful for our holiday services. Join in food, fun and fellowship decorating for this special day.



Sunday, December 10th Advent Fair - after worship. Everyone is invited to join together as we celebrate Advent with holiday craft making and a service project at our annual Advent Fair in the Calvin Room. Karen Barnes from Noonday Collection will also be selling jewelry and accessories from artists living in vulnerable communities from around the world. Noonday uses fair trade practices to sell items and provide financial support to those in deep need. *You don't want to miss this year's Advent Fair!*



Tuesday, December 12th from noon to 2:00pm - Lunch Bunch - Bring your own lunch and meet in the Calvin Room to break bread together in fellowship. We will be decorating holiday cookies for our guests at Rainbow Shelter! All are welcome.



Sunday, December 17th during Worship - Children's Christmas Pageant - Come see the kids of RPC dress up in fun costumes and use props to act out a story that celebrates Jesus' birth. It's sure to bring smiles to kids of all ages! **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL.**



Christmas Joy is a PC(USA) collection that helps support past, present, and future leaders in the Presbyterian Church. 50% of the gift assists current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. 50% of the gift makes it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. You can contribute to this collection by using the Christmas Joy envelopes in the pews, or by giving in-person or electronically and marking your gift for Christmas Joy.



Community Reach Toy Drive: This year, Community Reach plans to provide holiday gifts to 200 families. Toys should be new and for children aged 0-12. Gift cards should be \$25 or \$30 and are for children aged 13-17. Recommended gift card locations are Target, Amazon, Visa, or Mastercard. *Bring toys or gift cards to church by **Sunday, December 17th** to support Community Reach's Holiday Distribution.*



Sunday, December 24th at 10:30 am - Christmas Eve Morning Worship - Enjoy a holiday celebration featuring a baptism, filled with special music, and meaningful scripture as we retell the nativity story this Christmas Eve during morning worship. **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL.**



Sunday, December 24th at 5:00 pm - Evening Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. We will combine services with Emanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church (EIPC). Children and Adults alike are welcome to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, during a worship service filled with carols and candlelight.

THOSE SERVING TODAY
SUNDAY, DEC. 3rd

Communion Sunday

Deck the Halls after worship!

Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai
(pronounced "Y" "N")

Lay Leader: Aimee Ranaivoarijaona

Ushers: Elizabeth & Paul Boyer

Advent Wreath Reading: Carine and
Ivanka Nouna

Communion Servers: Beth & Harry Redd

Fellowship: *Deck the Halls lunch*

Counters: Elizabeth & Paul Boyer

Sunday School Teachers:
Carol Bogezi & Joel Masselink

THOSE SERVING NEXT SUNDAY
DEC. 10th

*Advent Fair immediately following
worship*

Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music : Huai-En Tsai

Lay Leader: Amy Macomber

Ushers: Sue & Dave Anderson

Advent Wreath Reading: The
Dawson Family

Fellowship: Advent Fair food

Counters: Ann & Jack Baur

Sunday School Teachers:
Mary Williams & Elke Herzfeld