

December 17, 2023
Rockville Presbyterian Church, Rockville, MD
www.rockvillepres.org



Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai

Soloist: Shinae Choi

Lay Leader: Anne Baur

Ushers: Kathy & Phil Ruxton

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

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Richard Willis

Welcome

Lighting of Advent Candle

Advent prayer:

Faithful God, renew our joy, 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.1-3)

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.

Light the Advent Candle, two:
Think of humble shepherds,
who filled with wonder at the sight
of the child of Christmas night. (*Chorus*)

Light the Advent Candle, three:
Think of heavenly harmony,
angels singing "Peace on Earth,
at the blessed Saviors' birth. (*Chorus*)

Announcements

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:

Holy One, you know our nature. You know that we so often choose to dwell in darkness. We wring our hands. We frown. We furrow our brows. We live in doubt. We reside in worry. We forget joy. We postpone glee. We choose shadow. We turn away from the miracle that is the baby in the manger. We turn away from the light of the star. Forgive us. We confess our choices. In your mercy, Holy One, forgive us.

Silence is kept for personal confession.

Assurance of Pardon

***Choral Response**

He Came Down

STF#2085 (vs. 2, 3 times)

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

THE WORD

Children's Sermon

Prayer of Illumination

Loving God, in this time of holy preparation, 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.

Psalm 96

Sing God a brand-new song!

Earth and everyone in it, sing!

Sing to God—*worship* God!

Shout the news of God's victory from sea to sea,

Take the news of God's glory to the lost,

News of God's wonders to one and all!

For God is great, and worth a thousand Hallelujahs.

God's furious beauty

puts the other gods to shame;

Pagan gods are mere tatters and rags.

God made the heavens—

Royal splendor radiates from God,

A powerful beauty sets God apart.

Bravo, God, Bravo!

Everyone join in the great shout: Encore!

In awe before the beauty, in awe before the might.

Bring gifts and celebrate,

Bow before the beauty of God,

Then to your knees—everyone worship!

Get out the message—God Rules!

God put the world on a firm foundation;

God treats everyone fair and square.

Let's hear it from Sky,

With Earth joining in,

And a huge round of applause from Sea.

Let Wilderness turn cartwheels,

Animals, come dance,

Put every tree of the forest in the choir—

An extravaganza before God as God comes,

As God comes to set everything right on earth,

Set everything right, treat everyone fair.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

2nd Reading:

Luke 1:47-55

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Christmas Pageant

Unity Hymn

While We Are Waiting, Come

#92

**1 While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.**

Refrain:

***Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.***

**2 With power and glory, come;
with power and glory, come. (*Refrain*)**

**3 Come, Savior, quickly come;
come, Savior, quickly come. (*Refrain*)**

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.



Give

Rockville Presbyterian Church

www.rockvillepres.org

Offering Anthem

Who Would Imagine A King

Hallerin Hill

***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

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.**

Benediction

Postlude

Silent Night

**Franz Gruber
(arr. Huai-En Tsai)**



**ROCKVILLE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



Rockville Presbyterian Church is a member of the More Light network of Presbyterian churches. We welcome everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability or marital status. We also welcome and encourage the full participation of persons without regard to sexual orientation.



Sunday, December 17, 2023
Welcome to Our Family of Worship
Rockville Presbyterian Church
ROCKVILLEPRES.ORG

The office will be closed Monday, December 18th

All RPC Members are welcome & encouraged to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting: Sunday, January 7, 2024 following worship service, to review a number of important governance and oversight decisions.

The meeting will be held in the Calvin Room, moderated by Pastor Susan, and will review key topics:

- ✚ Review and approval of Pastor Susan's Terms of Call for Calendar Year 2024 (Pastor Susan will excuse herself for this discussion)
- ✚ Election of some officers for term-limited vacancies. (Please consider your willingness to participate in the governance and mission of RPC through the Session, Deacons, and Trustees.)
- ✚ Highlights of the 2024 Budget that was approved by Session at their December 20th meeting. This is an important discussion as we continue to invest in our future!

This meeting is a Pot Luck, please bring a side dish to share if you are able!
RPC will provide the sandwiches/entrée. Nursery coverage will be provided.

PRAYERS & BLESSINGS

New to the Prayer list:

- ❖ Betty Harbaugh and her family as they grieve the passing of her granddaughter Michelle Mason Dencker.

We continue to pray for:

- ❖ Bernice Brown in the recent passing of her sister Betty and her upcoming cataract surgery; Jeff Taylor (Bob Taylor's son) who has recently been diagnosed with melanoma; Barbara Grewe; Bernice Brown's family member, Evan; Carine Nouna request: Sere, Ruth, and Esame (Shaney), Susan's friend Ann who is receiving chemotherapy to treat lung cancer; 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.

Huai-En, our Minister of Music will have choir practices in the Sanctuary (this is a change from previous announcements), this Sunday 12/17 and the following Sunday, and 12/24, at 9:15-10:00 am for the Christmas season.
All are welcome to join!!





TODAY! 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!
Please bring cookies to share for fellowship hour after, homemade or store bought, to share. Thank you. NO SUNDAY SCHOOL.



TODAY ! Community Reach Toy Drive: last chance.
 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. Recommended gift card locations are Target, Amazon, Visa, or Mastercard.



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
 LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Christmas Joy is a PC(USA) collection that helps support past, present, and future leaders in the Presbyterian Church. 50% of the gift assist 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.



Sunday, December 24th at 10:30 am - **Christmas Eve Morning Worship** - Enjoy a holiday celebration featuring a baptism and filled with music and 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. 17th

Children's Christmas Pageant during service
Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson
Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai
Soloist: Shinae Choi
Lay Leader: Anne Baur
Ushers: Kathy & Phil Ruxton
Advent Wreath Reading: The Macomber Family
Fellowship: Cookies
Counters: The Macomber's
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

THOSE SERVING NEXT SUNDAY, DEC. 24th

Combined service with EIPC
Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson
Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai
Soloist: Imani-Grace Cooper
Trombonist: Huai-En Tsai
Violinist: Shu-Ting Yao
Pianist: Szuyin Lin
Lay Leader: Joel Masselink
Ushers: Rachel Jung & Pat Wolff
Advent Wreath Reading: The Jung/Wolff Family
Fellowship: *Can you help?*
Counters: The Macomber's
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL