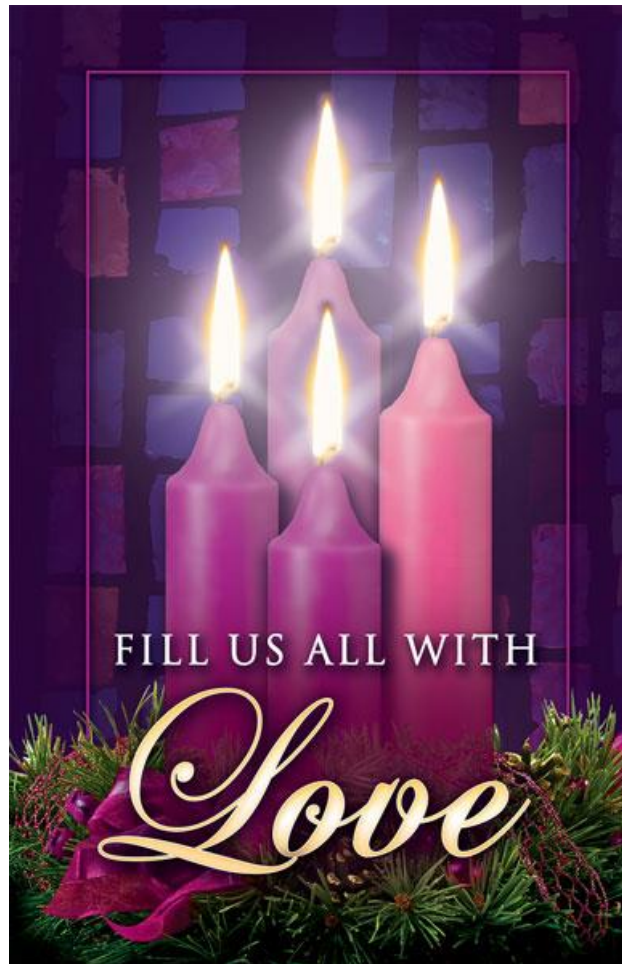


December 24, 2023
Rockville Presbyterian Church, Rockville, MD
www.rockvillepres.org



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

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

Away in A Manger

Traditional
(arr. Howlett/Tsai)

Welcome

Lighting of Advent Candle

Advent prayer:

Faithful God, renew our love, 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.1-4)

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*)

Light the Advent Candle, four:
Think of joy forever more;
Christ Child in a stable born,
gift of love. That Christmas morn. (*Chorus*)

Announcements (See pages 6-8 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:

Maker of all that is, seen and unseen, we approach the manger knowing that the gifts we bring will never be enough. You send us the gift of a Holy child. We dare not look upon his beauty. You send us the gift of a shining star. We dare not stand in its light. You send us the gift of angel songs. We dare not join in the chorus. You send us the greatest gift that has ever been given. We dare not open and receive. Help us, Divine Maker. Help us to know our worthiness in your eyes. Help us to receive fully. Help us to give fully.

Silence is kept for personal confession.

Assurance of Pardon

***Choral Response**

He Came Down

STF#2085 (3 times)

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

THE WORD

Children's Sermon

Sacrament of Baptism

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.

1st Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

2nd Reading

Titus 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, **12** training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, **13** while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **14** He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Choir

Joy To the World

G.F. Handel
(arr. M & J Dover)

Sermon

A Celebration of Christmas Carols

Angels From the Realms of Glory	#143
Gentle Mary Laid Her Child	#146
Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child	#126

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.*



Offering Anthem

What A Friend We Have in Jesus

**Charles Converse
(arr. Marianne Kim)**

***Doxology Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow**

NOTE: The words printed in the bulletin are slightly different from the words in the hymnal

**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, PCUSA *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.

Special Music

We Are the Reason

David Meece

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

There's a Star in the East

#135

1 There's a star in the east on Christmas morn.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Refrain

Follow, follow;
rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star of Bethlehem.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

2 If you take good heed to the angel's words,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow. (*Refrain*)

Benediction

Postlude

Have Yourself a Blessed Little Christmas

Hugh Martin
(arr. Austin Rupert)

Special Announcement!

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

PRAYERS & BLESSINGS

We pray for: the Macomber family and all who are traveling.

We continue to pray for:

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

Mason Dencker; 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.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Christmas Joy Gift – Collected until Sunday January 7th The Christmas Joy Gift will be collected until Sunday, January 7. 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.



Today 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.



**This Evening ! 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.
24th, 10:30 AM**

Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai

**Advent Wreath Reading: The Jung/Wolff
Family**

Soloist: Imani-Grace Cooper

Trombonist: Huai-En Tsai

Violinist: Shu-Ting Yao

Pianist: Szuyin Lin

Lay Leader: Joel Masselink

Ushers: Rachel Jung & Pat Wolff

Fellowship: Pat Wolff

Counters: Hold for 5:00 pm

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

**THOSE SERVING THIS EVENING
SUNDAY, DEC. 24th, 5:00 PM**

Combined service with EIPC

**Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson &
Rev. Cynthia Kekung Londah**

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai

**Advent Wreath Reading: The Tucker
Family**

Soloist: Imani-Grace Cooper

Trombonist: Huai-En Tsai

**Pianist: Szuyin Lin; Miranda
Mangindaan**

Lay Leader: Mike Herzfeld

Ushers: The Tucker Family

Counters: Elizabeth & Paul Boyer

THOSE SERVING NEXT SUNDAY, DEC. 31st

1st Sunday of Christmas

Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai

Lay Leader: Mary Ann Eull

Ushers: Mike Herzfeld & Ann Kelly

Fellowship: *Can you help?*

Counters: Anne & Jack Baur

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL



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.