

**December 31, 2023**  
**First Sunday of Christmas**  
**Rockville Presbyterian Church, Rockville, MD**  
[www.rockvillepres.org](http://www.rockvillepres.org)



**Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson**

**Minister of Music:** Huai-En Tsai

**Soloist:** Shinae Choi

**Lay Leader:** Mary Ann Eull

**Ushers:** Ann Kelly & Mike Herzfeld

**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     Jesus, Jesus, O What A Wonderful Child     African American Traditional**

**Welcome**

**Call to Worship**

Come! Everybody worship!

**Come to worship the newborn son of God!**

Come! Everybody sing!

**Come to sing carols to the newborn son of God!**

Come! Everybody adore him!

**Come to show love to the newborn son of God!**

Come! Everybody praise him!

**Come to proclaim the birth of the newborn son of God!**

Let us worship Christ!

Amen.

**\*Gathering Hymn**

**Joy to the World**

**#134**

**1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!**

**Let earth receive her king;**

**let every heart prepare him room,**

**and heaven and nature sing,**

**and heaven and nature sing,**

**and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!**

**Let all their songs employ,**

**while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains**

**repeat the sounding joy,**

**repeat the sounding joy,**

**repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,**

**nor thorns infest the ground;**

**he comes to make his blessings flow**

**far as the curse is found,**

**far as the curse is found,**

**far as, far as the curse is found.**

**4 He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

**Announcements (see pages 7-9 in purple)**

### **Prayer of Invocation**

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

### **Prayer of Confession:**

**Giver of all gifts, you sent us a baby messiah. We can scarcely understand the meaning of this gift. We tremble at the generosity. We tremble at the love. We tremble at the hope. We tremble at the wonder. The depth of your gift makes all else pale. Give us the confidence to boldly and fully accept the gift of Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Everlasting Messiah.**

**Silence is kept for personal confession.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

**\*Choral Response**

***He Came Down***

**STF#2085 (vs.1, 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

#### Prayer of Illumination

Loving God, in this time of holy celebration, 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 148

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights!

**Praise God, all God's angels; praise God, all God's host!**

Praise God, sun and moon; praise God, all you shining stars!

**Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!**

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for God commanded and they were created.

**The Lord established them forever and ever; God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

**fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling God's command!** Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

**Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!**

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

**Young men and women alike, old and young together!**

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for God's name alone is exalted;

**God's glory is above earth and heaven.**

The Lord has raised up a horn for God's people, praise for all God's faithful,

**for the people of Israel who are close to God.**

Praise the Lord!

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### 2nd Reading

#### Galatians 4:4

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**1 On this day earth shall ring  
with the song children sing  
to the Lord, Christ our King,  
born on earth to save us;  
him the Father gave us.  
Ideo, ideo,  
ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**2 His the doom, ours the mirth;  
when he came down to earth  
Bethlehem saw his birth;  
ox and ass beside him  
from the cold would hide him.  
Ideo, ideo,  
ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**3 God's bright star, o'er his head,  
wise men three to him led;  
kneel they low by his bed,  
lay their gifts before him,  
praise him and adore him.  
Ideo, ideo,  
ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**4 On this day angels sing;  
with their song earth shall ring,  
praising Christ, heaven's King,  
born on earth to save us;  
peace and love he gave us.  
Ideo, ideo,  
ideo gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**RESPONDING**

**Invitation to Present Our Tithes and Offerings**

Church offerings can be made electronically through our website:  
[www.Rockvillepres.org](http://www.Rockvillepres.org) *or by scanning our QR code with your phone.*



**\*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, 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

*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

#136

*Refrain:*

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. (*Refrain*)**

**2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo! above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth. (*Refrain*)**

**3 Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. (*Refrain*)**

**Benediction**

**Postlude**



**Away in a Manger**

**Traditional**

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**All RPC Members are welcome & encouraged to attend the  
Annual Congregational Meeting: next Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024 following worship service**

The meeting will be held in the Calvin Room, moderated by Pastor Susan, and will review a number of important governance and oversight decisions:

-  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 continue to pray for:

- ❖ For those who are traveling; 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 family member, Evan; Jeff Taylor (Bob Taylor's son) who has recently been diagnosed with melanoma; Barbara Grewe; 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 and UPCOMING EVENTS



The office will be **closed** Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>  
in observance of New Year's Day.

**Happy New Year!**

### PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT

Every church is apportioned a share of the expenses of the presbytery, the synod, and the General Assembly for ecclesiastical purposes. The apportionment is based on church membership. The amount varies with the needs of the presbytery, synod, and General Assembly, and is a regular expense payable by this church at the spring meeting of presbytery. The amount to be paid this year per communicant member is

- Electronically
- Cash
- Check

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The Hubbard Press

2024 Pledge envelopes are on the long board to the left as you enter the Calvin Room. They are alphabetized – pick yours up on Sunday. The Per Capita envelope is the blue envelope in the box.

**The Per Capita amount for 2024 is \$48.56 per person.**



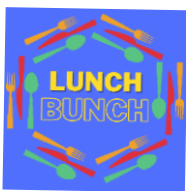


**CHRISTMAS JOY**  
**SPECIAL OFFERINGS**  
 LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

**Christmas Joy Gift** – Collected through next **Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>**

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.



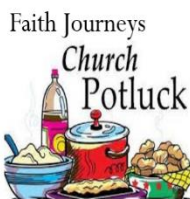
**Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> – Lunch Bunch from noon to 2:00pm** - Bring your own lunch and meet in the Calvin Room to break bread together in fellowship. All are welcome.



**Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>** - - the office will be **closed** in observance of Martin Luther King Day.



**Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> -Session** meets at 7:00pm in-person in the Calvin Room.



**Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> after worship – Faith Journey – WRPC Faith Formation Interview**

Plan to stay after worship on January 28<sup>th</sup> for our next faith formation presentation and group meal. This information interviews with members of our congregation are designed to help us get to know each other better and know that we have companions in our own faith journeys. This month we will hear from Huai-En Tsai, our new Minister of Music, and his wife Shu-Ting Yao. Thank you to the Fellowship Committee for organizing this event.

**THOSE SERVING TODAY SUNDAY, DEC.**

**31<sup>st</sup> 10:30 AM**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas

**Pastor:** Rev. Susan Graceson

**Minister of Music:** Huai-En Tsai

**Soloist:** Shinae Choi

**Lay Leader:** Mary Ann Eull

**Ushers:** Mike Herzfeld & Ann Kelly

**Fellowship:** Laurie Smith

**Counters:** Anne & Jack Baur

**NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**THOSE SERVING NEXT SUNDAY, JAN 7<sup>th</sup>**

**10:30 AM**

Epiphany Sunday

Communion Sunday

**Annual Meeting** after worship

**Pastor:** Rev. Susan Graceson

**Minister of Music:** Huai-En Tsai

**Lay Leader:** Harry Redd

**Ushers:** Sherry Smith & Mike Herzfeld

**Communion Servers:** Joel Masselink & Mary Ann Eull

**Fellowship:** Annual Mtg Potluck  
(main part of meal provided)

**Counters:** Amy & Jerry Macomber



**MORE LIGHT**  
PRESBYTERIANS

*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.*