

January 7, 2024
Rockville Presbyterian Church, Rockville, MD
www.rockvillepres.org



Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson

Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai

Lay Leader: Harry Redd

Ushers: Mike Herzfeld & Joel Masselink

Communion Servers: Joel Masselink & Mary Ann Eull

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.

Assurance of Pardon

*Choral Response

He Came Down

STF#2085 (v 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 8

God, brilliant Lord, yours is a household name.

**Nursing infants gurgle choruses about you;
toddlers shout the songs that drown out enemy talk,
and silence atheist babble.**

I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous,

your handmade sky-jewelry, Moon and stars mounted in their settings.

Then I look at my micro-self and wonder,

Why do you bother with us?

Why take a second look our way?

Yet we've so narrowly missed being gods, bright with Eden's dawn light!

You put us in charge of your handcrafted world, repeated to us your Genesis-charge,

Made us stewards of sheep and cattle,
even animals out in the wild,

Birds flying and fish swimming,
whales singing in the ocean deeps.

God, brilliant Lord, your name echoes around the world.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

2nd Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 6 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." 14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled because they are no more."

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 20 "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." 21 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. 23 There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Unity HymnSing of God Made Manifest*

#156

**1 Sing of God made manifest
in a child robust and blest,
to whose home in Bethlehem
where a star had guided them,
magi came and gifts unbound,
signs mysterious and profound:
myrrh and frankincense and gold
grave and God and king foretold.**

**2 Sing of God made manifest
when at Jordan John confessed,
“I should be baptized by you,
but your bidding I will do.”
Then from heaven a double sign—
dove-like Spirit, voice divine—
hailed the true Anointed One:
“This is my beloved Son.”**

**3 Sing of God made manifest
when Christ came as wedding guest
and at Cana gave a sign,
turning water into wine;
further still was love revealed
as he taught, forgave, and healed,
bringing light and life to all
who would listen to God’s call.**

**4 Sing of God made manifest
on the cloud-capped mountain’s crest,
where the law and prophets waned
so that Christ alone remained:
glimpse of glory, pledge of grace,
given as Jesus set his face
towards the waiting cross and grave,
sign of hope that God would save.**

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

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

R. Fischer Boyce

*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.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

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 and the power and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

SENDING

***Sending Hymn *What Star is This, with Beams So Bright* #152**

**1 What star is this, with beams so bright,
more lovely than the noonday light?
'Tis sent to announce a newborn king,
glad tidings of our God to bring.**

**2 'Tis now fulfilled what God decreed,
"From Jacob shall a star proceed";
and lo! the eastern sages stand
to read in heaven the Lord's command.**

**3 While outward signs the star displays,
an inward light the Lord conveys
and urges them, with tender might,
to seek the giver of the light.**

**4 O Jesus, while the star of grace
impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts refuse
the guidance of your light to use.**

Benediction

Postlude

He Is Exalted

Twila Paris

All RPC Members are welcome & encouraged to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting: after worship **today**, 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!

PRAYERS & BLESSINGS

New to the Prayer list;

- ❖ Peg Taboada who took a fall.

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; Jeff Taylor (Bob Taylor's son) who has recently been diagnosed with melanoma; Barbara Grewe; Carine Nouna request: Sere, Ruth, and Esame (Shaney), Verlin Morton (Pastor Doty's husband).



Our Homebound:

- ❖ Beth McDonald (Landfair), Bill Landfair.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPCOMING EVENTS

Revenues Team: Our elders recently voted to form this new team in order to identify new sources of income for our ministries. The Revenues Team will meet at least once a month (zoom or in-person) to prayerfully consider creative ways to support God's work in this community. If you think you can enhance this team, have new ideas you'd like to share, or are interested in volunteering your time, please contact Elder Dave Tucker or Pastor Susan to become part of this crucial team at RPC. All members and friends are welcome!

Our first meeting will be **Tuesday, January 16th, at 7 p.m.**

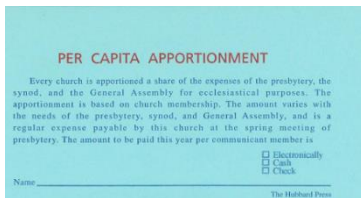


CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

LAST DAY - Christmas Joy Gift – Collected through *today Sunday January 7th*. 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.***



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



Tuesday, January 9th – 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 15th - - the office will be **closed** in observance of Martin Luther King Day.



SPECIAL TIME AND LOCATION - Wednesday, January 17th - Session Meeting **NOTE:** will meet at **5:00pm** at the home of Ann & Jim Kelly. Call for address - # (301) 983-4009.



RPC Night at Comedy Club!! Need a few laughs? Join RPC friends on **Saturday, January 27th**, as we yuck it up AND raise money for Rainbow Place Shelter! A portion of all ticket sales will go to Rainbow Place. Doors **open at 7:00 p.m.** Show **begins at 8:00 pm.** Tickets are \$20 each and **advanced purchase is recommended:** [Give a Hoot Comedy Club \(seatengine.cloud\)](https://seatengine.cloud)

Comedian Chris Coccia will perform (Comedy Central, Game Show Network, XM Radio, etc...). Full food and drink menu from La Mexicana Restaurant will be available. Give A Hoot Comedy Club, 16143 Shady Grove Rd. Parking is easy and free.



Sunday, January 28th after worship – **Faith Journey – Faith Formation Interview.** Plan to stay after worship on January 28th for our next faith formation presentation. These 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, JAN 7th 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 & Joel Masselink
Communion Servers: Joel Masselink & Mary Ann Eull
Fellowship: Annual Mtg Potluck (main part of meal provided)
Counters: Amy & Jerry Macomber
Sunday School Teachers: Elke Herzfeld & Mary Williams

THOSE SERVING NEXT SUNDAY,
JAN 14th 10:30 AM

Pastor: Rev. Susan Graceson
Minister of Music: Huai-En Tsai
Lay Leader: Beth Redd
Ushers: The Sorini Family
Fellowship: Can you help?
Counters: Amy & Jerry Macomber
Sunday School Teachers: Amy Macomber & Pat Wolff



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.