

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Established 1727 ~ An Open and Affirming Community

**First
Sunday
of
Advent**



November 30, 2014 ~ 10:00 a.m.

~ORDER OF WORSHIP~

We welcome all and extend a special greeting to our guests; our service is enriched by your presence! Please join us in Chapin Hall for fellowship time after worship.

*The Welcome Table in Chapin Hall offers information about the church and members who can answer your questions. **Hearing devices and large-print bulletins** are available for worship—ask an usher. **Nursery care** is always available down the hall in Room 4.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

Please include your full address and phone number as you sign our friendship registration pads, and please wear your nametags. All announcements should be written down and given to the ushers or pastors prior to worship.

If you have a prayer request you would like read aloud for today's prayers, please fill out one of the prayer cards found in the friendship registration pads (your name is optional) and be prepared to pass it to the aisles at the time of the offering, when the cards will be collected.

PRELUDE

"Pastoral Symphony from the Messiah"

Handel

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Meghan D. Young

In anticipation, we gather;

in expectation, we wait.

For the good news of God is coming to us:

light for darkness, hope for longing.

Into the hearts of the people, into the heart of the world,

the Lord of Advent is coming.

And all things shall see God's glory.

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and be God-with-us!

*HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Pilgrim (red) 110

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

****Bold type denotes collective response.***

***GATHERING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord of Advent, your people gather once more
and ready our hearts for your truth.

Speak to us again,
that we may learn to watch for your presence
and prepare your way, in a world of need.
Come, God of new births and beginnings,
awaken our one-candle hearts,
that we may see, in the coming of Christ,
the increase of light...

in hope, in peace, in joy, in love.

This we ask in Christ's name and spirit, as we also say together;

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 debts
as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE: HOPE Jim and Lois Stevens

In this season of Advent, we are here to watch and wait and pray for the coming of light into the world. We long for the day when the things of darkness – selfishness and greed, suffering and oppression - shall be no more. Today we light the first candle of Advent, the sign of God's hope.

A candle burns, the sign of our hope. God of hope, come to us again this Advent. May your hope live within us, burning as a light in our lives.

The first candle is lit.

Lord, by your loving presence, light up the past, that we might learn from it with thankfulness. Light up the present, that we might live in it with love. Light up the future, that we might prepare for it in hope.

As we watch and wait and pray this Advent season, may we always be ready to encounter the One who is already and always with us. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE

Two staves of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!" with chords Dm, Gm, C, F, Dm, Gm, C, F. The second staff contains the melody for "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!" with chords Dm, Gm, C, F, Dm, Gm, C, F. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

CHILDREN'S RECESSIONAL

(Children are invited to depart for S.P.I.R.I.T. Church School)

"We Will Keep a Place For You"

by John Corrado

Three staves of musical notation in D major, 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes.

We will keep a place for you where - ev - er you may go.

We'll sus-tain this home of faith and love you've come to know. Go in peace, bring

hope to hearts that yearn. We will keep a place for you 'till you re-turn.

ANTHEM

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

words Charles Wesley

The Choir

music Rowland Prichard

*Come thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to thy glorious throne.*

READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 64:1-9, Mark 13:24-37

SERMON

“Do Something, Start Here”

The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

*HYMN

“O How Shall I Receive You”

New Century (black) 102

OFFERING OF GIFTS

Following the receiving of offerings by the ushers, the pastor(s) will come to the center aisle to receive prayer request cards.

Invitation to the Offering

For those who have already given their offering, Giving Cards are available in your pew so that all may participate in the act of the offering.

Offertory Anthem

“Pastorale”

Zipoli

*Doxology



Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here



Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen

*Prayer of Dedication

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys & Concerns

Sung Call to Prayer

The musical score is written for two staves, treble and bass clef, in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: "Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God; in - cline your ear to us, and grant us your peace."

Pastoral and Silent Prayer

***HYMN** "Watcher, Tell Us of the Night" New Century (black) 103

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

LITURGIST

Nancy Parsons

ACOLYTES

Louis DiRenzo and Tyler Morgan

USHERS

Jim & Lois Stevens and Dave and Bobbie Hawkins

The flowers are given in honor of
my Uncle Dave and Jeff and Bill White by Jen Hernandez Meisterling.

The tower is lit this week by Bay Tran.

ADVENT GATHERING

Tonight, 5 PM – 7 PM

Join us for a pot-luck dinner, crafts, and worship as
we prepare for this of Advent to wait in anticipation for the birth of
Jesus Christ.

This is an intergenerational event for the entire church family and friends.

Please sign-up in Chapin Hall or email Meghan@rhccucc.org
to let us know you are coming.

S.P.I.R.I.T. Corner

Serve, Pray, Invite, Receive, Ignite, Tell

S.P.I.R.I.T. Faith Nurture Ideas

(Parents: Pick-Up your child in Chapin Hall)

These faith nurture ideas coordinate with the weekly session plans for church school. We hope you will join us in learning, teaching, and growing together!

Here's what we're learning about this week...

LESSON → Los Posadas

Mexico has a celebration called *Los Posadas*. This is a reenactment of the journey of Mary and Joseph to find a safe place to stay in Jerusalem and have their baby. *Los Posadas* happens during the last 12 days of Advent. Each night Mary and Joseph go from house to house asking if there is room for them to stay. Some places say there is "no room," just like the inn keeper. But finally, on Christmas Eve, there is one place that welcomes Mary and Joseph to stay.

Turn your home into a reenactment of the *Los Posadas* journey. Begin by preparing a small picnic, including snacks and a blanket to sit on. Put the name of every room in the house on small pieces of paper and place them in a basket. Draw one room name from a basket. Place the picnic inside the room listed on the piece of paper you chose. Shut the doors of all the rooms.

Pretend that you are travelers looking for a place to stay. You are tired and you are anxious about finding a place that will welcome you. Go from room to room carrying flashlights. At each door knock and together ask, "Is there room for us to stay here?" Open the door and look inside. If the picnic is inside the room, you will know that you are welcome to come in and enjoy hospitality. While you eat the picnic, talk about the importance of always letting Jesus into our lives. Our hearts and our homes must be open to all who need help and hospitality, just like Mary and Joseph did.

Prayer For The Week: God, help us to explore the journey to Bethlehem. Open our eyes and our hearts to the journeys you made, and help us to know you are always with us. *Amen.*

EPIPHANY PAGEANT

Interested in participating in this year's Epiphany Pageant on January 4? If so, please email Meghan Young at Meghan@rhccucc.org.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY



Several church members are interested in restarting a men's Bible study group. You may recall, about six men would meet once a month on Saturday morning in the church parlor room. If you would like to join a men's group to learn more about the Bible, faith building and the power of prayer with men of our church,

PLEASE CONTACT JIM STEVENS AT 860-632-5810

OR SEE HIM AT CHURCH.

Jingle Bell Rock!

A Children's Christmas Workshop & Celebration



Come join us for a fun-filled morning of singing everyone's favorite Christmas carols, playing games, making crafts, and decorating tasty treats. *Adult supervision provided.*

Saturday, December 13th
9 AM – 12 PM

Open to ALL children in PreK - 5th Grade

Bring a non-perishable food item or new toy for those in need in our community.

Freewill donations accepted to cover the cost of this event.

RSVP: Please Call 860-529-4167, ext 204 or email meghan@rhccucc.org to let us know you're coming!

WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event of winter weather on a Sunday morning, our first priority is to ensure the safety of church members. Some winters the snow and ice are a real danger, and so worship is cancelled for the day. If such a storm happens, please know that a system is in place to make as many of our members and friends aware as possible. If and when worship is canceled, notice will be posted on **Channel 3 WFSB-TV**, and the voice mail greeting on the church phone will be updated with the cancellation if you choose to phone the main number. Additionally, an email and phone tree will alert church leaders to the same information. It takes a real storm to disrupt our worship, but if that happens, we want to be ready. Cancellations will also be posted on the church website: **www.rhccucc.org**.

On weekdays, if schools are closed in Rocky Hill, the church office will also be closed.

SCRIP-SURE

What is it? Scrip-sure is a fundraising program for our church, which allows the regular shopping we do at a variety of retailers to generate income for the church. How? Participating retailers sell gift certificates or gift cards to our church at a discount. Church members buy the certificates for full face value and redeem them for full face value, and our church keeps the difference as revenue. Everybody wins! The retailers get our business, and our church gets a regular source of revenue that involves nothing other than what we would all be doing anyway – shopping/spending at grocery stores, drugstores, restaurants, gas stations, and many other businesses, including online retailers.

Today is the deadline for placing scrip orders to be delivered on Sunday, December 7. You may turn in an order form at the scrip table this morning. Orders may also be emailed to treasurer@rhccucc.org by the end of today. For a complete list of available retailers and restaurants, go to rhccucc.org/scriplist or pick up a listing at the scrip table in Chapin Hall.

There will be just one more opportunity to place orders before Christmas - December 14th (with delivery on December 23).

We continue to have a variety of cards in inventory from more than 35 different restaurants and retailers, available for immediate purchase this morning, including (but not limited to):

Coffee: Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks

Fast food: Boston Market, Burger King, Chipotle, McDonalds, Panera,
Subway, Wendy's

Gas: Exxon/Mobil, Shell, Sunoco

Grocery: Big Y, Stop & Shop, Trader Joe's, Westside Marketplace,
Whole Foods

Pharmacy: CVS, Walgreens

Restaurants: Bertucci's, Bonefish Grill, Buffalo Wild Wings,
On the Border

Shopping: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bed Bath & Beyond, Best Buy,
Home Depot, Kohl's, iTunes, Lowes, Marshall's, Shutterfly,
Staples, Target, Walmart

See Gail Hall at the scrip table this morning for a complete listing of available cards, or to have all of your questions answered.

THINK SCRIP!

**The Council invites EVERYONE— adults, children & youth –
to a special Visioning Dinner
Tuesday, December 9 -- 5:30 PM to 8 PM**

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend dinner and this special event in the life of our church. It is always healthy for an individual, family, or church to stop, evaluate, and understand where they are and where they are going. During this fun and fast paced evening, we'll revisit and update our vision: "Who are we, and who do we want to be?"

- 1) Come to dinner anytime between 5:30 and 6:15 PM.
- 2) At 6:30 PM sharp (!!) we will break into smaller groups for visioning fun!
- 3) We'll be done by 8 PM. We promise!!

RSVP using the sign-up sheets in Chapin Hall, or contact the church office: email office@rhccucc.org or phone 860-529-4167. Please share any dietary needs. Childcare will be provided.

"VERSIONS OF CHRISTMAS"

*A one-session Scripture study on the nativity texts in the gospels
with Rev. Brenda*

Thurs., Dec. 11, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

OR

Tues., Dec. 16, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.



We are often not aware that the stories of the birth of Jesus come in two almost entirely different versions in the New Testament. The two versions have been combined by Christians to make the one traditional, familiar Christmas story that we tell every year. But that composite story itself does not exist in Scripture. What can we learn for our own spiritual journeys through Advent and Christmas by paying close attention to what is and isn't there in the texts? And to the questions raised by the fact that we have differing versions to begin with? Come and enjoy some enlightening exploration and conversation... and some holiday goodies.



**CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES COUNCIL
CHRISTMAS PARTY:
YOU ARE ALL INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS
PARTY**

47 Vine Street, Hartford
on December 15, 2014 from 5-7.

A donation of non perishable food items is appreciated.

If you have questions, contact Rich Pawlich-Pagliccio at 860-257-8177

LESSONS & CAROLS RECEPTION – CALLING ALL BAKERS!



The Music Committee is looking for baked goods to be enjoyed at the reception after the Lessons & Carols service on 12/14. If you are willing to bake something, please contact Deb Copes by phone at 860-257-1099 or email at deb.copes@gmail.com. Please bring your goodies to Chapin Hall on Sunday, 12/14, plated and ready to serve! If you

do need a serving plate, let a Music committee member or an Inreach committee member know and one can be provided to you.

Music, Music, Everywhere



**LESSONS
& CAROLS**

December is a big month for music. We hope you will attend our **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** on **Sunday, December 14 at 4:00 p.m.** It will be a beautiful service of short scripture readings and music celebrating the birth of Jesus by adult and junior choirs, bell choir, and many instrumentalists. There is no admission charge, though a free-will offering will be taken to support the work of our church and local community. As always at our church, a lovely reception will follow coordinated and served by our Inreach Committee. Please come. You are welcome here!!!

THIS WEEK AT RHCC

November 30

Sunday

10:00am **Worship** Chapin Hall
11:20am **Children's Choir** Choir Room
11:40am **Adult Choir** Choir Room
4:00pm **Tamil Sangram** Rm 22, 23, 24, 25
5:00pm **Advent Gathering**



December 1

Monday

10:30am **Apple Rehab Service**
7:00pm **Women's AA** Chapin Hall
7:00pm **Bowling**
7:30pm **Bell Choir** Loft

December 2

Tuesday

11:00am **The Lodge Service**
7:00pm **Boards and Committees**

December 3

Wednesday

9:30am **Quilters** Room 6
7:00pm **Adult Choir**

December 4

Thursday

7:00pm **Search Committee** Fiorilli Room
7:30pm **Men's AA** Chapin Hall

BIRTHDAYS

THIS WEEK

Nov. 30

Dec. 1

2

3

4

6

John Hoffman

Anita Watson

Joseph Kunzelman

Jennifer Courtemanche

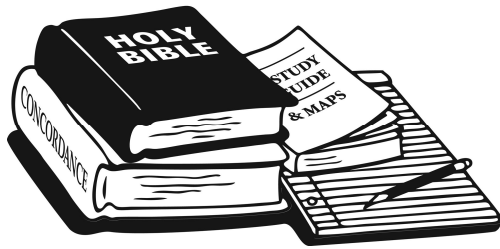
John Hummel

Marty Rowe

WORSHIP RECORDINGS AVAILABLE

Audio recordings, written sermons and bulletins for many of our Sunday worship services are available on the church website, **rhccucc.org** (See WORSHIP BULLETINS), or you may contact the office to request an audio CD or printed sermon.

Be Nourished



COMING AFTER THE HOLIDAYS.....

Things I've Always Wondered about Christianity (But Was Afraid to Ask)

A small-group exploration series based on topics provided by the congregation.

It's been my experience in many years of ministry that we are often carrying questions and struggles about very basic ideas, beliefs or meanings within the Christian faith that we don't feel we understand very well, or that may once have made sense to us but now make less sense, or that seem ill-fitting in some way with how we have experienced God or our own faith. It's good to have a community of others to talk with about those challenges. (For one thing, we generally find we're not alone in having them). This will be designed as a series of small-group conversations within which any and all questions, doubts or struggles can be shared, and we'll explore them together.

-Rev. Brenda

Examples:

I never did believe in the Virgin Birth. Does that mean I'm not Christian?

I have a lot of trouble with all the violence of God in the Bible. Am I supposed to believe that's really what God is like?

So much in the Bible is not plausible, scientifically or literally. Am I expected to believe it all literally? What if I don't?

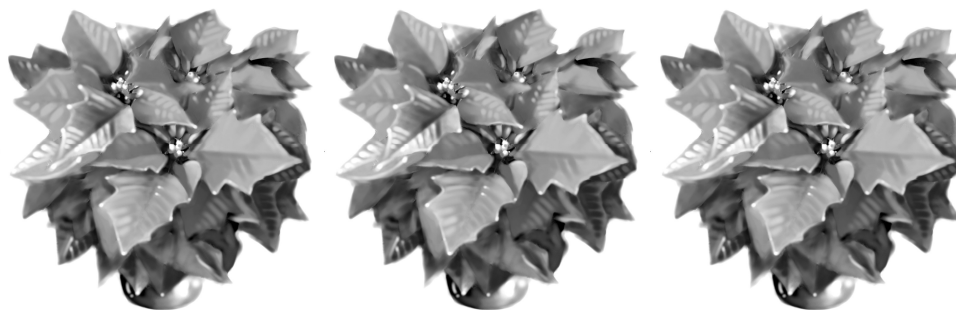
I used to believe in a "substitutionary atonement" (Jesus' death was in our place, "paid for" our sins) but now that seems absurd to me. How does someone else's death relieve my guilt?

I struggle with what to tell my children when bad things happen in the world. What can I tell them about God...?

If you would like to participate, there are forms in the narthex and in Chapin Hall to submit a question or topic by Dec. 12 (can be returned to the church office or placed in one of the marked envelopes in the narthex or Chapin Hall). Please indicate also your preference for a

meeting time for the small group. Plans will be announced after the input has been received.

*Remember to Honor your Loved Ones
With Christmas Poinsettias*



They will adorn the sanctuary for worship on
Sunday, December 21st

The cost is \$12.50 per plant.

Ordering deadline is Monday, December 15th

Please fill out the information below and mail to Kim Burghoff (see address below)

Given by: _____

Daytime Telephone number: _____

Dedication ("in loving memory of..." or "in honor of..." etc.):

1. _____

2. _____

Please select:

☐ I will pick-up my plant after worship on Sunday, December 21st.

☐ Use my plant to decorate the church through Christmas.

☐ The Deacons may give my plant to a shut-in or homebound member.

Make your checks payable to:

Rocky Hill Congregational Church with "Poinsettia" in memo line and mail to:

Kim Burghoff

204 Gray Fox Lane, Rocky Hill CT 06067.

You may call Kim with questions at 860 563-3287.

Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
805 Old Main Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Church Office: office@rhccucc.org / 860 529-4167

Church Website: rhccucc.org

Visit us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/rhccucc

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Friday

8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Open and Affirming Statement

Because we believe that all people are created in God's image and thus are blessed and loved equally by God, and because love is a unifying and strengthening force within our Christian Faith,

We, the members of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, hereby declare ourselves an Open and Affirming Christian community, actively expressing Jesus' inclusive embrace of all people.

We welcome all who seek to follow Jesus, including persons of every age, gender, race, national origin, faith background, marital status and family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, and educational background, to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our church family.

Jesus teaches us to welcome all God's children into God's covenantal community. As we grow together in faith and love, we will strive to celebrate the diversity in which God has created us.

Approved by congregational vote June 2009

Ministry Team

Ministers: All the members of the church

Interim Senior Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka brenda@rhccucc.org

Acting Associate Pastor for Faith Formation: The Rev. Meghan D. Young

meghan@rhccucc.org

Minister of Music: Mary DeLibero mary@rhccucc.org

Office Manager: Mitsey Baker office@rhccucc.org

Webmaster: Dave Hall webmaster@rhccucc.org