

**ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Established 1727 ~ An Open and Affirming Community

**Second
Sunday
of
Advent**



December 7, 2014 ~ 10:00 a.m.
Communion Sunday

~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

“Air” from the *Messiah*

Handel

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Meghan D. Young

A season, a journey...

a watching, a waiting.

A hoping, a trusting...

a believing, a rejoicing.

Advent carries us toward light, toward peace,

toward Christ.

Come, fellow travelers, watchful ones,

come and journey toward God.

*HYMN

“Isaiah, the Prophet Has Written of Old”

New Century (black) 108

**Please rise in body or in spirit.*

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

* GATHERING PRAYER

Gather us in once more, Lord of Advent,
and teach us to live as awakened people.
Teach us to live in justice and in peace,
to make straight what is crooked,
to lift up what is low,
to prepare your way in a world of need.
Gather us in once more, Lord of Advent;
help us to start everything in hope,
to welcome everywhere your peace,
to be courageous always for love,
that we may bear your light in this world.
In Christ's name and spirit we pray, Amen.

*SUNG RESPONSE

The musical notation consists of two staves of music in a 6/8 time signature. The first staff has the lyrics "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!" with chord symbols Dm, Gm, C, F, Dm, Gm, C, F above it. The second staff has the lyrics "Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!" with chord symbols 3 Dm, Gm, C, F, 4 Dm, Gm, C, F above it. The numbers 3 and 4 indicate triplet and quadruplet rhythms respectively.

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE: PEACE The John Engle family

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 second candle of Advent –
the sign of Christ's peace.

**A candle burns: the second marker of our Advent journey.
God of peace and justice, come to us again this Advent.
May your peace rule in our hearts, in our homes, in our land.**

The second candle is lit.

Lord, by your 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

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo.
Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia.*

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

READINGS FROM THE SCRIPTURE

From the Hebrew Scriptures

Isaiah 40:1-11

From the Gospels

Mark 1:1-8

SERMON

“Uneven Places”

The Rev. Dr. Brenda Pelc-Faszczka

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

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

setting by Sara Terrell

The Choir

*Comfort, comfort you, my people,
Tell of peace thus says our God:
Comfort those who sit in darkness
Bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them:
Tell them that their sins I cover
And their warfare now is over.*

*For the herald's voice is calling
In the desert far and near,
Bidding us to make repentance,
Since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise in meeting
And the hills fall down in greeting.*

*Yea, their sins our God will pardon,
 Blotting out each dark misdeed;
 All who well deserved God's anger
 God will no more see nor heed.
 They have suffered many a day,
 All their griefs have passed away,
 God will change their pining sadness
 Into ever springing gladness.*

*Make you straight what long was crooked,
 Make the rougher places plain;
 Let your hearts be true and humble
 As befits God's holy reign.
 For the glory of the Lord,
 Now on earth is shed abroad,
 And all flesh shall see the token
 That God's word is never broken!*

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here
 praise his name; Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen

***Prayer of Dedication**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Joys & Concerns

Sung Call to Prayer

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**

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Pilgrim (red) 107

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

This church practices open Communion. All are welcome to participate, including children, and regardless of denominational affiliation or church membership.

This morning, the congregation will be seated for Communion; the elements (bread and non-alcoholic grape juice) will be brought to each pew. Please wait until all have been served so that we may take the elements together. As you pass the trays to your neighbor, you may use the words “The bread of life” and “The cup of blessing.” If you would like to receive gluten-free bread, please raise your hand so that a Deacon may serve you.

Invitation

As we come to this table, we are gathered in the mystery of faith.

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

As we ready our hearts for the gifts of God, we are made one as God’s people.

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

As we remember the call of Christ, we renew our commitment to follow him.

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

As we receive that love that heals, forgives and redeems the world,
in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Blessing,

we rejoice, for our God, Emmanuel, is with us!

Prayer of Preparation

The 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 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.

Recalling the Story: The Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

To you, O God, who gives us life and new life,
we give thanks.

To you we turn our hearts and our lives,
that we might be bearers of the peace of Christ.

Send us now as your beloved,
to be bread for each other and light for the world,
as we follow Jesus into your kingdom.

In his name and spirit, Amen.

The Practice Of Peace

*You are invited to share a sign of the reconciling peace of Christ with those around you
(a handshake, an embrace, or a non-contact gesture).*

***HYMN** "Comfort, Comfort, O My People" New Century (black) 101

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE "Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern" J.C. Bach
(How Lovely Shines the Morning Star)

COMMUNION SERVERS Don Pagnucco, Gail Tine, Bob Inderbitzen,
Marge Murk, Nancy Parsons, Wendy Ware

ACOLYTES Victoria Bower and Louis DiRenzo

USHERS Janet Hansen, Betty Schako, Bea Donahue, Bob Simmons, Steph Heneghan

GREETERS Rhody, Cole and Grace Triblets

HOSPITALITY Christina and John Engel

**The flowers are given in loving memory of Stephanie Parsons
by her family Nancy and Barbara Parsons
and her grandsons Daniel and Jonathan.**

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

Serve, Pray, Invite, Receive, Ignite, Tell

***Children are invited to remain in worship today,
following along with the children and youth bulletins.***

EPIPHANY PAGEANT

Interested in participating in this year's Epiphany Pageant? If so, please join us for a brief meeting in the chapel following this morning's worship service or email Meghan Young at Meghan@rhccucc.org. Our first rehearsal will be Saturday, December 13 from 2 PM – 3 PM.

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!

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.

If you placed a scrip order at the end of November, you may pick up your cards at the scrip table in Chapin Hall this morning. During November, more than \$30,000 of scrip was sold, producing a profit for RHCC of more than \$2200, our second best month ever.

We will place one more scrip order prior to Christmas. Orders should be submitted by December 14th, and cards will be available for pickup on December 21. Meanwhile, 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**.

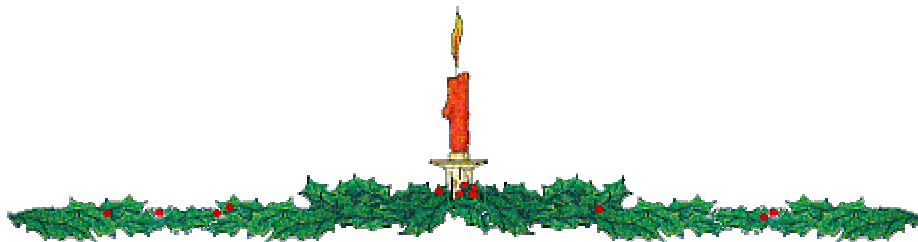
A donation of non perishable food items is appreciated.

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



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.**



LIGHT A CANDLE DECEMBER 14

As we enter a season that is filled with joy and happiness for most people, there are those who have lost a beloved child, that find this time difficult. The emptiness can be overwhelming. It is a time when Compassionate Friends, a national self-help organization, invites everyone to light a candle for one hour in remembrance of these children at 7:00pm local time, on Dec. 14th, the second Sunday in December.

Candles are first lit west of the International Date Line, then an hour later in the next time zone, eventually encircling the globe in a 24 hour wave of light.

Won't you join in, that their light may shine out to us all.

Website – www.compassionatefriends.org

Joan Tennyson





Sunday, December 14, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

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.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT DRIVE FOR COVENANT TO CARE



This year, we will again be collecting gifts to benefit the children in the Covenant to Care programs. This is a wonderful way to give the struggling children in our communities the gift of Christmas love. Kari McCaw-Blaise has a list of children who need presents. See her after church, email her at kariblaise@hotmail.com or call her at 860-803-4852 if you are interested in participating. Gifts will be collected until Sunday, December 21



14th ANNUAL COOKIE WALK

Yes, it's that time of year again!

Time to pull out your rolling pins and sifters and feed your sweet tooth!

This year we will be doing things slightly different. Based on the feedback we received last year, we have changed the format slightly. It will be held on

SATURDAY December 20

10:30 AM until 2 PM .

The snow date will be SUNDAY December 21 after church. Proceeds from the walk help support the Music program here at RHCC.

Pre-packaged tins and pre-orders will be available. If you would like to pre order you can contact Linda Tokarski (860-633-8413. or [ltokarski 64@gmail.com](mailto:ltokarski64@gmail.com)) or Marsha Hoffman (860-563-1367).

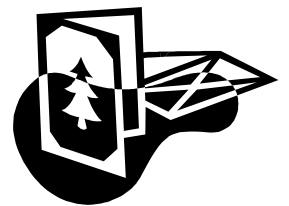
Please help us by signing up after church in Chapin Hall and baking a batch (or 2) of your favorite cookies. They can be dropped off in Chapin Hall Friday afternoon (December 19) between 2 and 6 or Saturday morning before 10.



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.



CHRISTMAS CARD DISPLAY

Please take a moment to view the new exhibit in the cabinet on the wall opposite the office. Joan Tennyson and Nancy Edwards have artfully displayed a collection of Christmas cards created by Nancy through the years. They are truly beautiful to view.

THIS WEEK AT RHCC

December 7

Sunday

10:00am **Worship**
11:15am **Pageant kickoff**
11:20am **Children's Choir** Choir Room
11:40am **Adult Choir** Choir Room
4:00pm **Tamil Sangram** Rm 22, 23, 24, 25
5:00pm **Confirmation**



December 8

Monday

7:00pm **Women's AA** Chapin Hall
7:00pm **Bowling**
7:30pm **Bell Choir** Loft

BIRTHDAYS

THIS WEEK
Dec. 9 **Kendres Lally**
13 **Thelma Somes**

December 9

Tuesday

8:30am **Breakfast Club** **Bob's Cafe**
6:00pm **All Church Visioning**

December 10

Wednesday

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

December 11

Thursday

1:00pm **Versions of Christmas** Fiorilli Room
7:00pm **Search Committee** Fiorilli Room
7:30pm **Men's AA** Chapin Hall

December 12

Friday

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

December 13

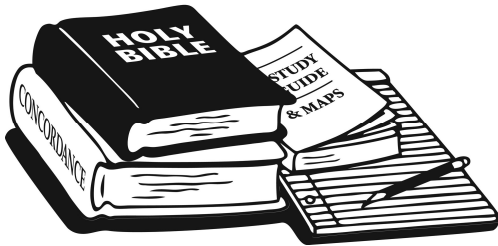
Saturday

9:00am **Jingle Bell Rock**
9:00am **Lessons & Carols Rehearsal**
2:00pm **Pageant Rehearsal**
4:00pm **Lessons & Carols Rehearsal**

**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?

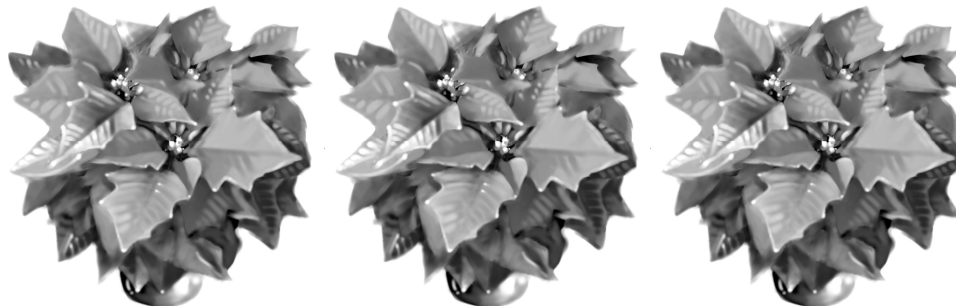
So much in the Bible is not plausible, scientifically or literally. Am I expected to believe it all literally? What if I don't?

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

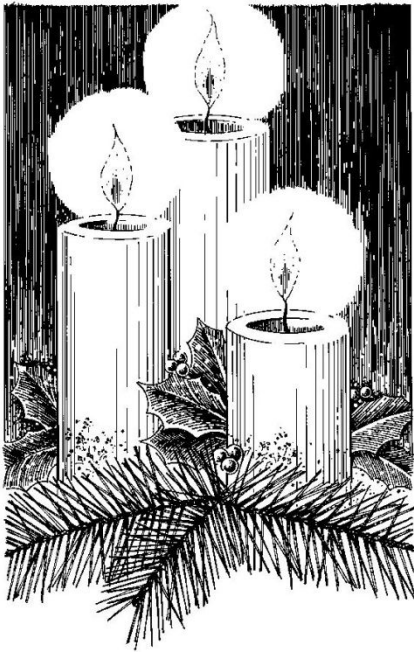
204 Gray Fox Lane, Rocky Hill CT 06067.

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



THE MEANING OF ADVENT

A LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS



Advent (from the Latin word ‘*adventus*,’ meaning ‘coming’) is a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ (Christmas), and looks forward as well to the future reign of Christ in the fullness of time. Observed for centuries in the Christian Church, and encompassing the four weeks before the church’s celebration of Christ’s birth, Advent is a preparation for, rather than a celebration of, Christmas, and is a season distinct from Christmas. In the church, the celebration of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve and continues for the next "twelve days of Christmas" (called “Christmastide”), until Epiphany (January 6).

In the Western Church, Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical year. A new cycle of liturgical readings (designed for Year A, B or C of the three-year cycle) begins with the first Sunday of Advent, and continues through the last Sunday after Pentecost, until a new church year begins with the next Advent.

Like Lent, Advent is a preparatory season....a time of looking forward and waiting for something greater, and discovering the spiritual value of readying ourselves and our lives for the inbreaking of God. Also as in Lent, the traditional liturgical color for Advent is purple, though beginning in recent years, the color blue, associated with Mary, is also used.

One of the most beloved symbols of this season is the Advent wreath. The circle of evergreens symbolizes the eternal and ever-renewing promises of God. The progressive lighting of candles (hope, peace, joy, love) marks our hoping and living in the increasing light, toward the full light of Christ that we celebrate at Christmas (the white Christ Candle is lit on Christmas Eve).

“Come, Lord Jesus!” are Advent’s traditional words. They are, in fact, the words found at the very end of the very last book in the Bible (Revelation). There is a sense in which, in the church “it is always Advent.” (Richard Rohr). We are always waiting, preparing, hoping, living toward the light, and watching for God’s Word to take flesh in us and in our world. Advent is our beautiful season for expressing what is always true for people of faith.

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