

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Established 1727 ~ An Open and Affirming Community



December 15, 2019 ~ 10:00 a.m.
Third Sunday of Advent

We welcome all and extend a special greeting to our guests; our service is enriched by your presence!

- Nursery care is offered during worship downstairs in Room 4.
- Hearing devices are available for worship; an usher will be glad to assist you when you ask.

Please join us for fellowship time after worship in Chapin Hall, which is located downstairs. The Welcome Table in Chapin Hall offers information about the church; and our members will be glad to answer your questions!

~ORDER OF WORSHIP~

For Reflection:

The Magnificat is one pregnant woman's response to a blessing from another...
The song is praise of the God who has blessed two insignificant women in an insignificant region of ancient Judah. The message [of this song] is so subversive that for a period during the 1980's the government of Guatemala banned its public recitation...

— Kathleen Norris

PRELUDE

Silent Night

arr. Cynthia Dobrinski

Handbell Choir

You are invited — as the music is playing - to come on up to the table at the front right side of the Sanctuary, to light a tea light and so help illuminate a word which represents our theme for this morning's worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *(after Isaiah 35:1-10)*

Sarah DeGiovanni

One Leave your exile behind; God is calling us home!

People We'll follow the Way through the desert.

One Enter the desert without fear; God's water will quench our thirst.

People We'll walk the Highway made for God's people.

One Travel the Highway with joy; God will lead us to life in abundance.

**People We'll strengthen weak hands and support the feeble;
 We'll encourage the fearful and calm the anxious:**

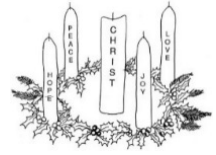
One Rejoice! Be strong! God is with us!

All Come, let us worship!

*(*please rise in body or in spirit; Bold denotes unison response)*

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE: JOY

*Today the Advent wreath will be lit by Heather Wolfe-Taylor,
Jarod and Alexander Taylor.*



PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND LORD'S PRAYER

Joyful and loving God,

As our expectation grows for the arrival of your Son, Jesus, we gather to be revived in the hearing of your word. Open our ears to hear and our eyes to see; challenge our minds and fill our hearts with the power that is love. May it be that in this time and place we have the courage to bear the light of Christ together.

**We pray this in the name of Jesus, the Redeemer,
who taught us how to pray, saying,**

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.

*Sung Response

When the Night Becomes Dark

music of Taize

(repeat 3 times)

Em Am⁶ E Am E

When the night be - comes dark, your love, O Lord,

Am E C⁶ Dm C F⁶ E Am

is a fire; your love, O Lord, is a fire.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

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

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



ANTHEM

The Huron Carol
The Choir

Traditional Canadian, arr. John S. Dixon

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scriptures
New Testament

Isaiah 35:1-10
Luke 1:39-56

SERMON

“This Great Joy”

Rev. Nada Sellers

Sharing some moments of silent reflection....



HYMN

“My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise”

(see insert)

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Following the receiving of offerings by the ushers, prayer request cards will be collected. For those who have already given their offering, Giving Cards are available so that all may participate in the act of the offering.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Mary's Song

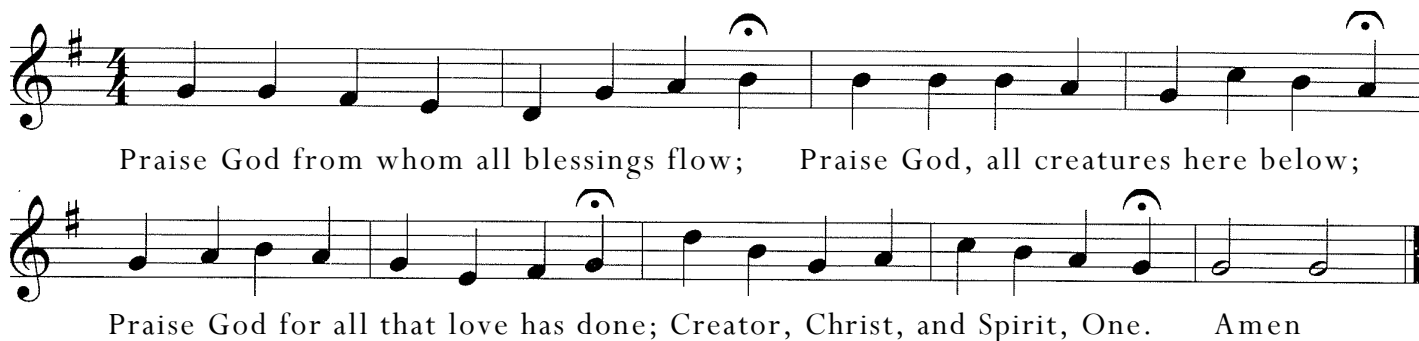
written by Liz Reed-Swale

1. The angel came last night, said I'm going to be the bearer of the greatest gift on earth.
I can hear them now: "She must be out of her mind."
Well, I'm feeling kind of crazy now, for what it's worth.
Don't you want someone better? I'm always wrong;
According to my mother, I'm not obedient or strong.
And I don't know if I can be all that You now ask of me—I've let you down before.
How could you have chosen me? I'm just a common nobody;
How can you see more? I'm just a girl.
 2. My Joseph, he's a darling, but I don't think he understands the weight that I now carry
Into this new year, into the wilderness, to Bethlehem, into this new era for humankind.
And Joseph, do you believe me? I know it's hard.
Cause I don't know if I can be all that God now asks of me—I've let him down before.
And I don't know how courage comes and goes, oh, maybe no one knows,
But I do know: I need you with me—I'm just a girl.
- God with us; he'll be God with us. God with us; oh, please, God be with us.
'Cause I don't know how I can be all that You now ask of me—I've let you down
before. And how am I supposed to know all the ways to help him grow—doesn't he
need more?' I'm just a girl.

The angel came last night, and said, "Mary, you're not just a girl..."



*The Doxology



Pastoral Prayer with Joys & Concerns

*DEDICATION PRAYER *(together)*

All praise and thanks to you, O God, for these gifts we now return to you. Receive and bless each offering for its intended use in the ministries of this church here and throughout the world. In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen.

*HYMN

Joy to the World!

PH 130

BENEDICTION

One	Let us go forth, with expectation, using our voices to proclaim: We do the work of justice...
People	In Christ!
One	We find the practice of mercy...
People	In Christ!
One	We share good news for the poor...
People	In Christ!
One	We rejoice in the vision of peace...
People	In Christ!
ALL	<i>Thanks be to God! Amen!</i>

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

Johann Christoph Bach

LITURGIST

Sarah DiGiovanni

USHERS

Deb Copes, Steph Heneghan and Steven Smith

GREETER

Joan Tennyson

HOSPITALITY

InReach



The DeGiovanni family has lit the church tower this week in honor and celebration of the 100th birthday of longtime family friend, **Cynthia Drake Hugli**.



WELCOME - We'd like to stay in touch with you! Here's how...

- Please include your full address, phone number and email as you sign our friendship registration pads.
 - 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.
 - If you have announcements, they should be written down and given to the ushers or pastor prior to worship.
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Parts of the service adapted from Worship Ways content for 12-15-19, written by Rev. Susan A. Blain, Minister for Worship and Gospel Arts, Justice and Local Church Ministries. Permission granted to reproduce. Quote from: *Amazing Grace; A Vocabulary of Faith* by K. Norris. (Riverhead Books, NY, 1998)

Our Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 22 – Fourth Advent

Tuesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Worship Services

5:00 p.m. Family Service with Story and Carols

11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Choir

Sunday, December 29 – First Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, January 5 – Epiphany Pageant



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.

We have most of the usual cards in inventory for immediate purchase this morning. Here is a partial list of cards typically available:

- Coffee: Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks
- Gas: Exxon/Mobil
- Pharmacy: CVS, Walgreens
- Fast food: Burger King, Boston Market, Chipotle, McDonalds, Panera, Subway, Wendy's.
- Restaurants: Bonefish Grill, Outback Steakhouse, Red Lobster
- Shopping: Ace Hardware, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bed Bath & Beyond, Home Depot, Jo-Ann Fabrics, Kohl's, iTunes, L.L. Bean, Lowes, Michaels, Target, Total Wine, Walmart.
- Grocery: ShopRite, Big Y, Stop & Shop, Trader Joe's, WholeFoods, Westside Market.

Today (Dec. 15) is the ordering deadline for cards that are not kept in inventory. Orders may be turned in at the scrip table in Chapin Hall this morning. Cards ordered today will be available for pickup on Sunday, Dec. 22. After today, the next order will not be placed until late January. A complete listing of all retailers available through our program can be picked up at the scrip table in Chapin Hall.

Did you know that you can donate to the Rocky Hill Food Pantry and "Covenant-to-Care for Children" through our scrip program? Your cash/check donations are used to buy gift cards to local groceries (food pantry) or other retail stores (CC). For these donations, we do not retain any profit, so a \$1.00 donation effectively buys about \$1.07 in groceries or clothing.

Think SCRIP!



Outreach & Witness Ministry – Thanks for helping us make the holidays special for children in need. Today we will accept the wrapped gifts for the children and youth on our social worker's caseload so they may be delivered in time for Christmas. Forgot your gift? Scrip donations are also welcomed for the children.



Remember to Honor your Loved Ones With Christmas Poinsettias



Ordering deadline is TODAY, Sunday, December 15.

The plants will adorn the sanctuary for worship on Sunday, December 22 through Christmas Eve and the New Year. The cost is \$12 per plant. Make your checks payable to: RHCC 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.

Order forms are available in the Narthex and Chapin Hall.

PLEDGE DRIVE THANK YOU

From the Pledging committee: For all of you who have filled out and sent in a commitment form and time & talent card, THANK YOU!

If you need pledging envelopes for 2020, we do have them. Please either email me, Deb Copes (deb.copes@gmail.com), call me (860-729-6541) or catch me at Coffee Hour.

We also have the ability to set up recurring/one-time gifts via Vanco's electronic funds transfer (EFT). If you are interested, reach out to me (Deb) and I will walk you through it. It is a very easy process.

Deb Copes & Jarod Taylor

faith and
finances

**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE**



A new sign-up portal for Liturgists, Ushers and Sunday building opening, can be found on our website: RockyHillUCC.org.

Check in with us on facebook and Instagram, too!

RHCC Newsletter: Submission deadline for the January issue of The Church Mouse is Monday, December 16. We want to hear from you! Send your articles and photos to: office@rhccucc.org.



Tom and Doris Schreier Warm Heart Tree

Help us decorate the Warm Heart Tree in Chapin Hall with new, donated hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves for all ages. In addition, tube socks for men are also very much needed. Donations will be collected now through January

Sunday, December 22 – 1:30pm– Carol Sing! All are welcome!

Join us for an afternoon of singing everyone's favorite Christmas carols. We will be visiting several nursing houses and our church family shut-ins and sharing our gifts. All ages welcome. We will meet at the church and car pool and come back to the church afterward for light refreshments.



Christmas Offering

As you know, our church is committed to providing generous support to those facing life challenges here in Rocky Hill, near throughout the region, and far beyond the borders of our state. We plan to dedicate our special Christmas offering to Church World Service (CWS), which provides many types of support to people throughout the world. CWS's Best Gifts Program allows us to allocate our offering in a variety of different ways. A letter detailing our Christmas Offering has been sent to all church members.

You may donate your Christmas offering in any of three ways:

1. Attend Christmas Eve worship services and offer your donation in the envelopes provided.
2. Send a check to the church office, noting "Christmas" in the memo line.
3. Donate through our church website www.rockyhillucc.org. Click on the "Support Us" link at the top, then click on the orange "contribute on line" box. Enter your donation amount in the "Special Offering" line and designate "Christmas" in the text box to the right.

Thank you in advance for your generous contributions to CWS which will provide much-needed assistance to our neighbors throughout the world. This, indeed, is the true spirit of Christmas.



THIS WEEK AT RHCC

December 15

10:00am Worship
9:30am Childcare
10:00am Church School
1:00pm Cookie Walk
5:30pm Advent Potluck

December 16

7:00pm Women's AA
7:00pm Bonsai
7:30pm Bell Choir

December 17

7:00pm Cedar Hollow

December 18

6:00pm LSP Board
7:30pm Choir

December 19

7:30pm Men's AA

December 20

Pointsettia Delivery

Sunday

Sanctuary
Room 4
Rms 24,25,26
Chapin Hall
Chapin Hall

Monday

Fiorilli
Chapin Hall
Sanctuary

Tuesday

Fiorilli

Wednesday

Fiorilli
Sanctuary

Thursday

Chapin Hall

Friday

Sanctuary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

15 Linda Grillo
19 Mildred Sword
20 Nicholas Jokl

Dec 21 – 4pm
Solstice Walk



Dec 24 – 5pm
Family Service

Dec 24 – 11pm
Candlelight service

JOIN US FOR HOLIDAY FUN & FELLOWSHIP

19th Annual **Cookie Walk & Sale: TODAY 1:00pm – 3:30pm**, in Chapin Hall.
Bring a friend and fill a tin with homemade cookies and treats.

Today at 5:30pm – Advent Family Night!

Join us for a pot-luck dinner, crafts, and a carol-sing, as during this season of Advent we wait in anticipation for the birth of Jesus Christ. Bring a salad, a main dish, or a dessert. This is an intergenerational event for the entire church family and friends. This event was rescheduled from Dec 1 due to snow.



Congregational Care Ministry

There is an opportunity to bring a flower and a smile to someone during this season of joy. Anyone interested in delivering Poinsettias to home-bound and nursing home residents, please contact . -Don Pagnucco, Wendy Ware, Steph Heneghan. The flowers will be available on Friday, Dec 20.



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: www.RockyHillUCC.org

Visit us on Facebook & Instagram at: [RHCCUCC](#)

Office Hours: Open Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Friday – Closed

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

Pastor:

Rev. Nada Sellers

nsellers@rhccucc.org

Minister for Children & Youth:

Georgette Huie

ghuie@rhccucc.org

Minister of Music:

Mary DeLibero

mary@rhccucc.org

Office Manager:

Theresa E. Cleary

office@rhccucc.org

Webmaster:

Steve Smith

admin@rhccucc.org

WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY - In the event of bad winter weather predicted for a Sunday morning, our priority is to ensure the safety of our church members & friends. If worship is canceled, a notice will be posted Saturday evening or early Sunday morning on the following media outlets:

- Channel 3 WFSB-TV
- Our facebook page – facebook.com/rhccucc
- Our website – RockyHillUCC.org