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## December 2012 Newsletter

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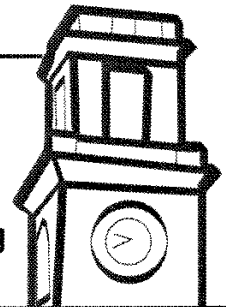
# Break Open the Heavens!

## Advent Season Worship & Events

- Sun, Dec. 2** 10:00 a.m. *1st Sunday of Advent* - Worship and Communion  
5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. **Advent Family Night**, Potluck Dinner,  
Crafts, and Worship (RSVP)
- Mon, Dec. 3** 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. **Ecumenical Women's Advent Retreat** (RSVP)
- Sun, Dec. 9** 10:00 a.m. *2nd Sunday of Advent* - Worship and Toy Drive  
4:00 p.m. **Lessons & Carols** - an evening of music from the choirs
- Sat, Dec. 15** 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **Jingle Bell Rock**  
Carols, Crafts & Cookies /PreK-5th Grade (RSVP)  
5:00 p.m. **Service of Remembrance and Healing**
- Sun, Dec. 16** 10:00 a.m. *3rd Sunday of Advent* - Worship Service  
11:00 a.m. **Cookie Walk** following worship  
2:00 p.m. **Christmas Caroling** in Rocky Hill
- Sun, Dec. 23** 10:00 a.m. *4th Sunday of Advent* - Worship
- Mon, Dec. 24** 5:00 p.m. **Christmas Eve Intergenerational Service**  
11:00 p.m. **Service of Candlelight and Communion**
- Tues, Dec. 25** 9:00 a.m. **Christmas Day Worship**
- Sun, Jan. 6** 10:00 a.m. **Epiphany Pageant** - bring baby items (diapers, food,  
formula) for families in need  
6:00 p.m. **Epiphany Service and Potluck** (RSVP)

Rocky Hill Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ

For more information: phone 860-529-4167 • email [office@rhccucc.org](mailto:office@rhccucc.org)  
[www.rhccucc.org](http://www.rhccucc.org) • [facebook.com/rhccucc](http://facebook.com/rhccucc)





My dear friends,

In her new book on prayer entitled *Help, Thanks, Wow*, Anne Lamott talks about the human capacity to know wonder. We have moments when we are so in awe of someone or

something that brings us to the place when we are almost speechless, but not quite. It's at that moment, she says, that we utter the prayer, "WOW!"

The Incarnation – the overflowing of God's love and grace and hope into the world through Jesus – has always moved to me to pray "WOW!" That God so loves us and wants to show us the depth of that love...WOW. That a young woman named Mary summoned her courage and said "Yes...WOW. That an older man named Joseph listened to the voice of angels and changed his mind....WOW. That Jesus was born in poverty and became a refugee to a foreign land...WOW.

Over the years at RHCC, UCC, there have been many moments during the Advent and Christmas season that have led me – and I suspect many of us in the congregation – to pray "WOW." The love expressed in a collection of toys for children in need...WOW. The glorious music of the Lessons and Carols service, so magnificent that it cannot have originated solely by human effort...WOW. Moments of grace amid tears at healing services...WOW. Candlelights held high, illuminating the sanctuary....WOW. Christmas Eve communion at the manger...WOW. Children's faces and voices during the Epiphany pageant...WOW.

We cannot manufacture moments of wonder. But we can trust our God that love will flow once again and that grace will be in abundant supply this holy season. Whether it's at worship or a family night, in the Lessons and Carols service or caroling to homebound friends, or during Christmas Eve or the Epiphany pageant, there will be moments when we are almost speechless, but not quite. Our call, dear friends, is to open ourselves – hearts, minds, souls, and spirits – to watch and look and wait for the times when the heavens break open and we will be moved to wonder and to pray WOW.

Peace,  
Donna



## Break Open the Heavens! Advent, 2012

O God, that you would break open the heavens and come down,  
that the mountains might quake at your presence. . .  
that the nations may tremble at your presence! – Isaiah 64:1-2

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>December 2</b>   | <b>First Sunday of Advent</b>  | The Reverend Donna K. Manocchio                    |
|   | Scripture: Luke 1:5-22 – Zechariah<br>Sermon: “Break Open to Silence”                  |  |
| <b>December 9</b>   | <b>Second Sunday of Advent</b>   | Meghan D. Young                                    |
|  | Scripture: Luke 1:26-38 – Mary and the Angel Gabriel<br>Sermon: “Break Open to ‘Yes’ ” |  |
| <b>December 16</b>  | <b>Third Sunday of Advent</b>  | The Reverend Donna K. Manocchio                    |
|  | Scripture: Luke 1:39-45 – Mary and Elizabeth<br>Sermon: “Break Open to Blessing”       |  |
| <b>December 23</b>  | <b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>   | The Reverend Donna K. Manocchio                    |
|  | Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25 – Joseph<br>Sermon: “Break Open to a New Dream”             |  |
| <b>December 24</b>  | <b>Christmas Eve</b>   |  |
|  | 5:00pm Intergenerational Service<br>11:00pm Communion Service                          | Meghan D. Young<br>The Reverend Donna K. Manocchio |
| <b>December 30</b>  | <b>First Sunday after Christmas</b>  | Meghan D. Young                                    |
|   | Scripture: Luke 2:41-52<br>Sermon: “What Child Is This?”                               |  |



Christmas season is coming, whether our current-day world is ready or not. Just think of it – the leader of the free world has just been elected, many countries around the world function in a state of unrest, financial pressures on families and businesses continue, we worry about our economy going over the “fiscal cliff” and thousands of

our countrymen were threatened and left homeless by the destructive power of nature. Has it always been this way?

People in biblical times faced challenges, too. We read numerous stories in the Bible about war, famine and natural disaster. Yet in those tumultuous times, not unlike ours, God chose to give the world a child born in poverty. His birth was witnessed by shepherds and became a source both of wonder for the Wise Men and of a threat to a king. How could God have thought that a child could possibly make a difference in that time and place? How can a child make a difference in our time and place?

A good question to start off the Christmas season...

Bill Hoffman, for the Deacons

*The Board of Deacons*

*Spiritual Welfare*

*Membership Vitality*

*Ministering*

*Do You Have a Special Talent?*

*(Everyone Does!)*

*Juggling*

*Poetry Readings*

*Dancing*

*Magic Tricks*

*Ensembles*

*Impressions*

*Crafts*

*Skits*

*Hula Hoop*

*Stand-Up Comedy*

*Singing*

*Zumba*

*Acrobatics*

*Sound Effects*

*Rapping*

*Instrumental Solos*

*Yoga*

The Music Committee is organizing an adult talent show, to be presented on **February 9 at 6 pm** in conjunction with a chili supper. The program will benefit local mission projects. If you would be willing to share your special talent, please speak with any member of the Music Committee.

Our scrip profit for the month of October was **\$1,514!!!!** Just think.....\$1500/month for the church just by using scrip for your groceries and many of your other purchases. Thanks so much to **ALL** who participated!!!!



It doesn't seem possible that this year will be our 11th Cookie Walk! We would like to thank all of you who have baked for us, bought from us, and supported us through that hectic week for the past 11 years.

Cookie Walk is a major fund raiser for the choir. It has allowed us the opportunity to travel to Sweden and to South Carolina for performances as well as provide additional support for the Music Program at RHCC, UCC.

This year The Walk will be held Sunday December 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:15 until we are sold out. Snow date will be December 23rd. As in previous years, we will offer gluten free and diabetic treats as well as nuts/ no nuts. We will also be able to pre-package treats on request.

We ask for signups to make sure we have a wide variety of treats. We are also asking for help setting up on Saturday the 15th, and for the first time assistance with cookie decorating. If you don't feel you can bake but you have an artistic bent we have a place for you!

Please see either of us after church in Chapin Hall or call / text us at the numbers below.

Marsha Hoffman  
860-563-1367

[psuuconn@cox.net](mailto:psuuconn@cox.net)

Linda Tokarski  
860-633-8413

[ltokarski64@gmail.com](mailto:ltokarski64@gmail.com)



### **Christmas Caroling**

**Sunday, December 16 at 2:00pm**

Join the Music Committee for an afternoon of singing your 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 hot cocoa and cider.

# Global and Local Mission News



As we move forward in our mission ministry, let's gather strength and focus from a prayer by John Veltri, S.J., [a Canadian spiritual director and expert guide for those presenting the Spiritual Exercises.]

Teach me to listen, O God, to those nearest me, my family, my friends, my co-workers. Help me to be aware that no matter what words I hear, the message is, "Accept the person I am. Listen to me." Teach me to listen, my caring God, to those far from me— the whisper of the hopeless, the plea of the forgotten, the cry of the anguished. Teach me to listen, O God my Mother, to myself. Help me to be less afraid to trust the voice inside — in the deepest part of me. Teach me to listen, Holy Spirit, for your voice — in busyness and in boredom, in certainty and doubt, in noise and in silence. Teach me, Lord, to listen. Amen.

This prayer reminds us that God is still speaking. It also reminds us that He speaks through each one of us, near and far. As we continue our mission work, close to home and far away, let us hear His guidance from our hearts and through one another.

1 John 4:7: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and every one who loves is born of God and knows God."

Listening is an important and necessary expression of love. Love is giving of ourselves unselfishly, sacrificially and unconditionally to meet the needs of those to whom it is expressed. And one universal human need is the need to be understood. We want to be assured that somebody knows us, is sensitive to what is happening inside us, feels what we are feeling in the deepest part of our being, and still accepts us and cares for us. It is impossible for anyone to do that except one who truly listens to us. Listening says, "I care about you. You are important enough to invest all the time and effort that is necessary for me to understand you."

[Excerpt from: Who's Listening?

Study By: [Richard L. Strauss](#) , From the Series: [Abraham](#)]

Our congregation has shown great compassion to the needs of others globally. Thank you to Meghan Montana and the entire sub-committee for raising awareness and acquiring Global Missions Designation for Rocky Hill Congregational Church. Our Cereal Box Drive to support Haitian Artisans was a

big success. Also, the jewelry sale on November 4<sup>th</sup> was a huge success, so much so that there was a demand for another day of sales. Thank-you Lisa Eleck for providing that opportunity. Last but not least, thanks to Kari Blaise and Cindy Hunt for organizing the Turkey Drive. Many area families were able to have a meal on Thanksgiving due to their efforts.

As we move on to future activities and events, let us continue to listen and hear the need of others, outside and within the walls of our congregation.

### **Upcoming Events:**

**BLANKET CARDS** – Benefitting Church World Service, will be sold in Chapin Hall after service on the following dates: 12/2, 12/9 and 12/16. Keep someone warm in honor, or in memory of a loved one! Also the Best Gift catalogs will be put out on the table. Marge Murk will let folks know how to order things from the catalog online. Thanks Marge!



### **December 9<sup>th</sup> - TOY DRIVE – NEW DETAILS**

This year our Annual Toy Drive will be a little bit different. We are teaming up with our Covenant-to-Care Social Worker to provide Christmas gifts to children in the Hartford area. The presents that we purchase will be the only presents that many of the children receive. We have a list of 50 children to provide gifts for. Each child has one gift request. The name, gender, age and request for the child will be printed on an ornament that can be taken off The Giving Tree that will be located in Chapin Hall. Please take the ornament, purchase the gift and bring the wrapped gift with the ornament attached to church on December 9<sup>th</sup>. We will bless the gifts and present them to our DCF social worker. Please see Kari McCaw-Blaise or email her at [kariblaise@hotmail.com](mailto:kariblaise@hotmail.com) for questions or if you want to purchase a present and the ornament tree is empty.

**Since last month, *your generosity has helped the following:***

- Food Pantry Donations from Church Fair - \$28
- Bridgeport Congregational Church – Hurricane Sandy Relief - \$1,000
- Total Jewelry Sales from November 4<sup>th</sup> - \$1,500 + (will update next month)  
(Goes directly back to Haiti)

### **Your Board For Missions Members**

David Bell – Treasurer, Michael Bower, Linda Calcagni – Chair, Bob Carberry, Jim Day, Cindy Hunt, Thomas Kainamura, Meghan Montana – Vice-chair, Kari-McCaw-Blaise – Secretary, Sarah Mosure.



Thank you very much for your great generosity for the Turkey and a Thirty Campaign on November 18th! Our church community is amazing! Your kindness for others is overwhelming! Thanks to you, we collected 73 turkeys this year and over \$2700 in donations for Foodshare. Thanks to you, many Connecticut families will enjoy a bountiful feast for the holiday, when they might otherwise go hungry. During these busy and sometimes hectic days, it is often hard to imagine that there are so many needy families in our own communities. Thanks to your help, many families will have a much happier holiday. On behalf of the Missions Board and Foodshare, thank you very much for your terrific response again this year! Gratefully, Cindy Hunt and Kari McCaw-Blaise, event co-chairs.



**FOR TOWN OF ROCKY HILL RESIDENTS**

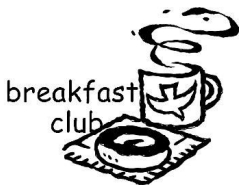
The Town of Rocky Hill Human Services Department will distribute fresh food baskets and/or gifts to disadvantaged households for the upcoming Christmas holidays. We are seeking Rocky Hill residents who may benefit from this distribution. Residents must demonstrate a financial or other legitimate need to qualify. All inquiries are confidential. Please call 860-258-2799 or 258-2724 to register.

**Wednesdays, 12:00 to 1:00 PM in the Fiorilli Room**



Each week, we gather to read and explore the Scriptures to be used in an upcoming worship service. All are welcome. No experience necessary. Bring your favorite translation or pick one up from the shelf. Brown bag lunch is optional.

**Breakfast Club**



**Tuesday, December 11 at 8:30 AM**

We meet at BOB'S COFFEE SHOP, 33 New Britain Avenue in Rocky Hill. Come join us for coffee, conversation, and community!

**Theology on Tap**

We will not meet in December due to the holiday. Join us on January 10, 2013 at Panera Bread—New Location!

**Women of the Bible**

We will not meet in December due to the holiday and the Women's Retreat. Please join us at the retreat and we'll see you on January 17, 2013!



# LESSONS & CAROLS

**Concert Sunday, Dec. 9 at 4pm**

Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
805 Old Main St. Rocky Hill, CT 06067  
for more information: (860) 529-4167

Join us for a free family concert of Advent and Christmas carols interspersed with readings of the Christmas story. This Rocky Hill Congregational Church annual tradition will feature our senior and children's choirs as well as the handbell choir and members of our orchestra. All are welcome; childcare for children 4 years and under will be provided. Reception to follow.



## **“Warm Heart Tree”**

For the 38th year, the Warm Heart Tree has returned to the narthex and will be up through January 6th. We will once again be collecting donations of warm hats, gloves, packages of white athletic socks, and scarves to decorate the tree. Men's hats should be black, brown, or gray without decoration. Please place your donations directly on the tree. Donations can be hand-made, bought, or even a new re-gifted item (let someone

benefit from 'Mom, what was Grandma thinking, I will NOT wear that!'). The donations will be distributed to some of Connecticut's neediest. Some of the children and teen donations will be removed from the tree and delivered BEFORE Christmas to the The Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents located in Rocky Hill.



**STEWARDSHIP  
COMMITTEE**

As we enter the season of Christmas giving and receiving, we wish to express joy and blessings for your sincere generosity during this year. Together we are stewards of our congregation's ministry. We share in so many special ways – through time given, or talents and skills put to use in unique ways, or foods prepared and goods donated, and monetary gifts received in support of budgetary needs. The spirit of Christmas is evident year around. We are deeply grateful.

Christmas Blessings and Peace to each and all,

The Stewardship Committee:

Bill Bartley, Louise Butts, Al Diaz, Michele Jokl, Dave Sageman, Barry Wilcock.

*A Special*  
**THANK YOU**

*My dear friends,*

*How wonderful it is to be back with you again and participating in mission and ministry! My heart is overflowing with deep gratitude. Thank you to the members of this congregation for the gift of sabbatical time, and for your prayers and work during my time away. Thanks to Meghan and Pete, who led with dedication and grace. I am grateful for the many ways that the Spirit of the living God weaved itself into my heart and soul during my sabbatical. You can take a look at my sabbatical journal in Chapin Hall. Stories of my experiences will be forthcoming (and yes, for those of you who are wondering, I did try SURFING!) but for now, let us lift our praise and thanks to our God, whose presence, power, and peace restore and renew us all.*

*Peace,*

*Donna*

In October, 39 families ordered scrip at an average of \$539 per family (average of \$39 income to the church by each family). **Can we make this 50 families?????** If you're not sure what Scrip is, please be sure to ask Gail Hall at the Scrip Table in Chapin Hall next Sunday to see how YOU can participate also!

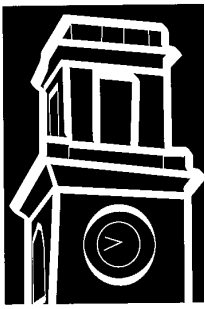


- |    |   |    |                                      |
|----|---|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1  | John Hoffman<br>Billie Charamut<br>Aaron Vann                 | 14 | Dave Hall                            |
| 2  | Arthur Weil<br>Anita Watson<br>Joe Kunzelman<br>Tamara Connor | 15 | Linda Grillo<br>Chloe Bellizzi       |
| 3  | Liz Cardello<br>Jennifer Courtemanche                         | 16 | Rebecca Alferi<br>Eva Shen           |
| 4  | John Hummel   | 17 | Alex Siembab<br>Jacob Engel          |
| 5  | Debbie Schreier   | 19 | Midge Sword<br>Carolyn Scheirey      |
| 6  | Marty Rowe  | 20 | Julia Stewart<br>Nicholas Jokl       |
| 7  | Robert Mullins<br>Christina Jensen                            | 21 | Holly Peterson<br>Christina Santiago |
| 8  | Lawrence Siembab  | 24 | Nancy Edwards                        |
| 9  | Kendres Lally<br>Amy Murk<br>Julie Fell                       | 25 | Jonathan Rutigliano                  |
| 11 | Gary Nicholson<br>William Knight                              | 26 | Janet Kunzelman<br>Aaron Moore       |
| 12 | Nathan Friday   | 27 | Donald Stedman<br>Nicholas Lizotte   |
| 13 | Ralph Ahlberg<br>Thelma Somes                                 | 28 | Nathan Vann                          |
|    |   | 29 | Nicholas Cardello                    |
|    |   | 30 | Krista Pender<br>Karen Meszaros      |



**Rudy and Barbara Burgess**  
were married on  
**December 29, 1956**

Since early fall, we have had 5 new families order scrip and 5-6 families become more active. We are pleased that more families are learning to “think scrip” for many purchases. Every scrip card ordered brings in money to help underwrite the work we do as a church family.




**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**  
**Sunday Morning Worship**  
**Communion 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday**  
**10:00 a.m. with childcare**



**CHILD**  
**care**  
 Provided



**2012**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<b>2</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 10:00am All Church Chorus 11:30am Noah's Table 11:30am Lessons & Carols 5:00pm Advent Family Night	<b>3</b> 5:30pm Advent Women's Retreat 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	<b>4</b> 7:00pm Board and Committee Mtgs	<b>5</b> 9:00am Quilters 10:30am Apple Rehab Svc 12:30pm Bible Study 7:00pm Lessons & Carols and Adult Choir
<b>9</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> <b>ANNUAL TOY DRIVE</b> 11:15am Pageant Kickoff 11:30am Noah's Table 3:00pm Lessons & Carols Warmup 4:00pm Lessons & Carols Concert	<b>10</b> 2:00pm The Lodge Svc 5:30pm Yoga w/Lynn 7:00pm Women's AA 7:00pm RHCC Bowling 7:00pm RHCCNS Mtg 7:30pm Bell Choir	<b>11</b> 8:30am Breakfast Club	<b>12</b> 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 7:30pm Adult Choir
<b>16</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 11:00am Cookie Walk 11:30am Noah's Table 2:00pm Christmas Caroling	<b>17</b> <b>Poinsettia's Due</b> 5:30pm Yoga w/Lynn 7:00pm Women's AA 7:00pm RHCC Bowling 7:30pm Bell Choir	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 6:00pm Community Meeting 7:30pm Adult Choir
<b>23</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>24</b> <b>5:00pm &amp; 11:00pm Christmas Eve Svcs</b> 7:00pm Women's AA	<b>25</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 9:00 Christmas Service 	<b>26</b> 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 7:30pm Adult Choir
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <b>New Year's Eve</b> 7:00pm Women's AA		

**VOICE MAIL INSTRUCTIONS** – If you call the church and the Voice Mail answers, you do not have to listen to the entire message. Anytime during the message you can have the call transferred directly to the person you are trying to reach by simply keying in the following numbers:

- |  |     |                                  |     |
|--|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Donna Manocchio, Senior Pastor                                       | 202 | Mary DeLibero, Minister of Music | 207 |
| Meghan Young, Acting Director CE<br>and Minister for Faith Formation | 204 | Thomas Munger, Custodian         | 205 |
| Carol Harvey, Office Secretary                                       | 201 | RHCCNS (Nursery School)          | 208 |



*A Season  
for  
Sharing*



**“SCRIP-SURE”  
Order Schedule**  
Scrip delivery is  
December 2

Scrip order  
deadline is  
January 6

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<b>1</b> 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 10:30am <b>Vocal Workshop</b>
<b>6</b> 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 10:00am <b>Lessons &amp; Carols Rehearsal</b> 6:00pm <b>Dinner/Movie</b>
<b>13</b> 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 9:00am <b>Jingle Bell Rock</b> 2:00pm <b>Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal</b> 5:00pm <b>Advent Healing Svc</b>
<b>20</b> 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn
<b>27</b> 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn

Where did our  
scrip profit  
come from in  
October??  
Grocery store  
cards comprised  
33% of our \$1514  
monthly profit.  
Second most  
popular??.....it  
was clothing  
and department  
stores at 20% of  
the profit with  
restaurant scrip  
at 12%.

**ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

United Church of Christ

805 Old Main Street – Rocky Hill, CT 06067

(860)529-4167 office • (860)257-9637 fax

office @ rhccucc.org • website: rhccucc.org • Visit us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rhccucc](http://www.facebook.com/rhccucc)

Office Hours 8am-2pm Monday– Thursday / 8am-noon Friday

**The Reverend Donna K. Manocchio, Senior Pastor**

**Meghan Young, Acting Associate Pastor and Minister for Faith Formation**

**The Reverend Arthur C. Weil, Minister Emeritus**

**Mary DeLibero, Minister of Music**



## **FAITH FORMATION @ RHCC**

### **S.P.I.R.I.T. Corner Check-in: Church School**

We started our second unit of the year, *Mary & Elizabeth's First Christmas*, on November 18. The time of waiting we know as Advent is a time of anticipation. We remember that hope, love, joy, and peace are gifts that come with the promised one – Jesus.

Any family awaiting the birth or adoption of a child is filled with anticipation and these stories are not just personal family stories but the story of God's family and these babies who will grow up to change the world. As we hear the stories of Mary and Elizabeth, other characters become important as well – Zechariah, Joseph, and the two babies, John and Jesus. These stories are tied together but are not often put together in the same unit – yet it is only human nature to want to hear the whole story. The announcement of two pregnancies – especially pregnancies such as these – need to include the news of the births. The unit will include Luke 1:5-2:7. By the end of the unit we hope to have connected the stories of Elizabeth and Mary as family stories and as part of our story.

*Check out the "What We're Learning Now" box for more information, and learn with us!*

### **Youth Group**

Youth group has met throughout November. On Sundays, Noah's Table meets over lunch to discuss what it means to be disciples. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Youth Group gathered, for a night-in at the church. We checked-in with each other, made a delicious dinner, played some games, and then took a flashlight tour of Center Cemetery in honor of all Souls Day. At each of the 10 graves we visited we lit candles and thanked God for the gifts and lives of those who helped build our church, while recognizing the gifts we have to offer.

**NURSERY VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS REQUESTED:** Donations of storage bins and toy boxes are needed to organize the Nursery. Additionally, Nursery Volunteers are needed for December and January. If you are interested in volunteering in the Nursery during Sunday morning worship, please contact a member of the Childcare Committee ([RHCCchildcare@gmail.com](mailto:RHCCchildcare@gmail.com)) for more information. You can also sign-up outside the Nursery.

## Here's What's Happening This Month...

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** *You do not want to miss these!*

Date	Scripture/Lesson
Sunday, December 2	<b>Advent Gathering: 5 PM – 7 PM</b> Join us for a pot-luck dinner, crafts, and worship as we wait in anticipation during the season of advent. An ALL ages event.
Sunday, December 9	<b>Pageant Kick-Off: Immediately Following Worship</b> Interested in being part of the pageant? Join us in the chapel, for a brief 30 minute meeting, as we introduce the 2012 Epiphany Pageant and assign parts. ALL ages welcome. <i>Mark your calendars, the Pageant is Sunday, January 6.</i>
Saturday, December 15	<b>Advent Gathering: 9 AM – 12 PM</b> A Children's Christmas Carol Workshop. <i>See flier for more information. RSVP requested.</i>
Saturday, December 15	<b>Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal: 2 PM – 4 PM</b> Come meet in the Sanctuary for the 1 <sup>st</sup> rehearsal.

## S.P.I.R.I.T Church School Calendar: *What we're learning this month.*

Date	Scripture/Lesson
Sunday, December 2	First Sunday of Advent <i>Communion Sunday, Family Worship</i>
Sunday, December 9	Second Sunday of Advent Week 3: Mary & Elizabeth's First Christmas
Sunday, December 16	Third Sunday of Advent Week 4: Mary & Elizabeth's First Christmas
Sunday, December 23	Fourth Sunday of Advent <i>Family Worship</i>
Monday, December 24	Christmas Eve <i>5 PM Intergenerational Worship, 11 PM Traditional Service with Communion</i>
Tuesday, December 25	Christmas Day <i>9 AM Intergenerational Worship</i>

## Youth Group Calendar: *December*

Date	Fellowship Gatherings
Friday, November 30	Youth Group Gathering (6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>h</sup> Grade) → 5 – 9 PM
Sunday, December 2	Noah's Table (6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>h</sup> Grade) → 11:30 AM – 1 PM
Sunday, December 9	Noah's Table (6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>h</sup> Grade) → 11:30 AM – 1 PM
Sunday, December 16	Noah's Table (6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>h</sup> Grade) → 11:30 AM – 1 PM

## S.P.I.R.I.T. CHURCH SCHOOL – What We're Learning Now!

### COME JOIN THE CIRCLE: Unit 2 – Mary & Elizabeth's First Christmas

As we approach the season of Advent, a new year is beginning for those of us called Christians; not a time of fireworks and wild celebrations but rather a time of reflection, meditation, prayer, and preparation. Take time ponder the story of Mary and Elizabeth's first Christmas. Slow down and notice how small kindnesses are offered and passed along in this story. Think of ways you can be a messenger of kindness.

The stories told in the beginning of Luke tell us of angel visitations to Zechariah and Mary bringing startling news of impending births. Interestingly, those who are visited by the angel respond with songs and not just songs of joy. These are songs of the world turned upside down. The proud are scattered, rulers are toppled off of thrones, hungry are fed, and the rich are sent away with nothing. This is not how the world works even today, but Mary sings of a God who will make it happen and Zechariah sings of a Savior who will bring a new day – light will shine on those who live in darkness. Join in exploring these songs of Advent, and look for ways they connect with your own life songs.

May the words of your mouth, the meditations of your heart, and the actions of your body be acceptable in God's sight – this season and evermore.

### Share Your Faith During Advent.

- 1) **Read Luke 1:5 – 2:7.** Who do you connect with in the story?
- 2) **Reflect.** Each night at dinner name aloud a small kindness you experienced that day.
- 2) **Sing your Song.** As a family, think of ways you can sing the good news, by doing small kindnesses for family, friends, and neighbors

**A Prayer For The Unit.** God, you bring hope to all people just the way each new day is a new beginning. Help us to bring hope to others just the way you do. *Amen.*

*Don't forget to learn along with us in our weekly bulletins.  
Check them out for faith nurture ideas you can use at home.*

## ADVENT GATHERING

Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5 PM – 7 PM

Join us for a pot-luck dinner, crafts, and worship as we break open the season of Advent to wait in anticipation during the season of Advent 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](mailto:Meghan@rhccucc.org) to let us know you are coming.

# CONFIRMATION



Confirmation means affirmation of faith. It is an acknowledgment by both the individual and the faith community of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The rite of confirmation is celebrated in worship as a community, both in response to and in anticipation of the work of God in the life of a believer.

Confirmation class is now well underway. We've made a covenant with one another, started this journey of getting to know the church and each other, jumped into learning about the Bible and worship, collected turkeys, and attended an interfaith worship. With the season of Advent starting the new Church year, we're looking forward to meeting our confirmation mentors who will be joining us throughout the year.

## **December Schedule:**

*Here's what we're learning and doing this month...*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class/Event</b>	<b>Times</b>
Sunday, December 9	<i>Worship: Lessons &amp; Carols</i> <i>**Pick one to attend: either Lessons &amp; Carols or Christmas Caroling</i>	4 PM Service
Sunday, December 16	<i>EVENT: Christmas Caroling</i> <i>**Pick one to attend: either Lessons &amp; Carols or Caroling</i>	2 PM
Sunday, December 16	<i>CLASS: Prayer</i> <i>*Meet your Mentors</i>	5 PM – 7 PM



# Jingle Bell Rock!

## A Children's Christmas Carol Party

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

**Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**9 AM – 12 PM**

*(Adult supervision provided.)*

**Open to ALL children in PreK - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

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

**RSVP Appreciated:**

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

## Pastoral Letter on Racism

November 2012

Dear Covenant Partners,

The United Church of Christ, throughout its history and the shared histories of our predecessor bodies, has shown clear commitments to racial justice and equality. As Conference Ministers we feel compelled to speak out at this moment in time.

Our ancestors in faith led the movement for abolition. They were a voice of reason at the dawn of Reconstruction, when America attempted to rebuild a nation buttressed by white power and privilege. They fought long and hard during the time of Jim Crow to gain new ground in the equality of all races. They fought to end red-lining districts that forced black families into ghettos. And they walked arm in arm with our brothers and sisters of color during the Civil Rights movement.

They were willing to be jailed, persecuted, ridiculed, and even at times martyred for the cause of racial justice and equality.

Our own commitments to this movement of equality for all races are now being put to the test. In the days following the re-election of this nation's first black president, there are painful reminders of how pernicious the evils of white power, white privilege, and white supremacy remain in this great land of ours. And now is not the time for those who see with new eyes the fresh face of a richer, more diverse people to be silent. We must also let our practice and behavior reflect our commitment, by constantly examining ourselves lest we fall prey. (2 Cor. 13:5)

Like the women and men who in previous times found their courage, their voice, their call to action – so must we now find ours as well. Let us hear again, and be inspired by, the words of the great abolitionist poet James Russell Lowell, who in “The Present Crisis” wrote:

“New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth; they must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth.”

Long before white men once again claim by divine right a privileged place at the expense of all others; and long before America loses the forward momentum gained in her great and interminable struggle with racial equality; and realizing that, though momentum has been gained and big steps taken toward racial justice, there is yet more light and truth to break forth in this ongoing struggle for equality: let us in this day renew our commitment to the struggle for racial justice and equality. Let us awaken to the new threats that are emerging in these days to this embrace of equality. Let us not be daunted by the long, hard road – but be invigorated by the gains made, emboldened by the costs paid already by true disciples, and energized by the promise of a vision of Shalom that many of us can see on the horizon of this new day

We call on all settings of the church to maintain a vigilant voice in this struggle for racial justice and equality. We invite you to engage once again in Sacred Conversations on Race that open new doors for new understandings about race, prejudice, and privilege. We urge you to speak out when voices emerge on the landscape that threatens to turn back the clock and undo the work of those who came before us. We invite our white members, families, and churches to develop new skills as allies in dismantling white privilege and fostering new dimensions of racial justice and equality. We call upon preachers to find their voice and speak out when local and national leaders reclaim the old language of white power and privilege. And we invite us all to be in fervent prayer for that hoped-for day when all “will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

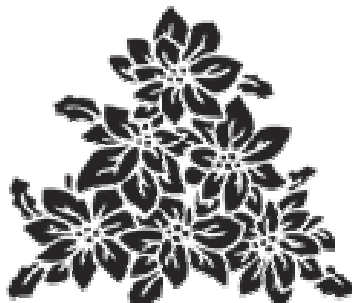
With a new hope for a new day to inspire us, we remain your humble servants in Christ,

The Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ

## Good News from the Trustees

“As expected, our renovated heating system is providing significant savings from the combination of improved efficiency and cheaper fuel. Our natural gas bill for October was about \$350 where as our old fuel oil steam boiler would have used about \$1000 worth of fuel oil for the month.”

### *Remember to Honor your Loved Ones With Christmas Poinsettias*



They will adorn the sanctuary for worship on  
**Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**The cost is \$12.00 per plant.**

**Ordering deadline is Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**

Please fill out the information below and mail to Joan Diaz (*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 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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:**

**Joan Diaz with “Poinsettia” in memo line and mail to:**

15 Thistle Down, Cromwell CT 06416.

You may call Joan with questions at 860 613-2889.



**Come Join us for Dinner and a Movie  
Saturday, December 8, 2012  
at 6:00 pm in Chapin Hall.**

**The film showing will be Academy Award winning,  
"The King's Speech"**

starring Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter.

When England's throne is suddenly thrust upon him amidst royal family scandal and impending world war, King George VI must overcome a lifelong, debilitating speech impediment to lead his nation. After his iron-willed, compassionate wife, Elizabeth secretly enlists an eccentric speech therapist, the two men forge an unlikely friendship that will ultimately empower the monarch to find his voice, inspire his people and rally the world. Based on an inspiring true story, *The King's Speech* has been universally hailed as a "masterpiece." The majestic cast is overwhelming.

Sneak preview for January - *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*

## **News from the Fair Committee**

**"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time, they just have the heart".** This quote best describes our annual country fair. We had over 50 members of this congregation, along with their family and friends offer our community an extravagant welcome on October 27th. They worked hard to present twelve beautiful booths, each unique and special.

We had our church quilters, who diligently meet week after week, gift us with a lovely quilt to raffle; and our own Joan Diaz had the winning ticket! Marsha Hoffman and her tireless team prepared many apple pies and served over 100 delicious roast beef dinners. Tommy Munger worked hard all week, meeting all the "gentle demands" of the booth chairs. Carol Harvey worked with us months in advance helping us in many ways – from articles in the bulletins to permits from the state. Lisa Gilbert donated produce to the farmers market, as well as created a welcoming autumnal display by our entrance.

It takes a great amount of work, determination and desire to achieve a successful fair and we were blessed to have all involved share in our mission, **which generated a net profit of \$10,431.** Your fair committee is very proud of what was accomplished and want to thank everyone involved – both those who helped and those who shopped!

Phyllis Wilkey, Chairperson

James Stevens, Neal Cox, Elaine Somes, Candace Smith, Lynn McKenna, Don Pagnucco, Polly Pagnucco, Deb Copes, Nancy Flynn (treasurer), Marsha Hoffman (consultant)



## December 2012: Birth and Transformation

Written by Tom and Lynnea Morse

*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. John 1:1*

We recently toured the western Hunan province in China, to see the work being done in that region. Like many of our trips over our years in China, it was a reminder that even though hundreds of millions of people have benefitted from China's rise, there are still many regions that look only slightly different from 100 years ago. We visited a small village church, which was little more than a single bare cement room. The entire village was gathered to give thanks to God for changing their lives. As one villager described it, "In the past, you could hear us fighting before you even stepped into the village. It was said that we were a people who could quarrel from morning to night." That changed nearly 10 years ago when one of the women left the village to hear a preacher in a nearby city. The trip took her several hours, but she kept going back, and over time she was accompanied by almost every family in the village.

A few years later, with the help of Global Ministries' partner, the Amity Foundation, a church was built in their village. It was the first church outside of the city. It wasn't long before the new church community had given birth to new life, and transformed the village through the Holy Spirit. The fighting stopped; even the local government noticed the change and awarded them the title of "Harmonious Village." Reading became a priority for many of the villagers, and one woman even studied while she worked the fields by having her husband print verses that she could tack to her plow. While we are excited by the work that the Amity Foundation does with Global Ministries, such as building roads, schools and clinics, we never lose sight of the fact that it is only God that can repair hearts, lives and communities.

We pray today for the people of the Church in China, and rejoice that in God's grace, new congregations are being established every week. We look to our Christian sisters and brothers in China and learn to share our harmonious joy in faith with others in our communities.

*Tom and Lynnea Morse recently returned from nearly five years of service in China. Tom served with the Nanjing Drum Tower Hospital in English communications. Lynnea served as an English teacher with the Amity Foundation of China through Church World Service.*



### Adopt a Family for the Holidays

The Town of Rocky Hill, Human Services Department is still looking for individuals, businesses and/or organizations to adopt families for the upcoming Christmas holiday. This would include providing a meal for the family for Christmas and also buying clothing and/or toys for members of the family under age 12 for Christmas. Please help us make a Rocky Hill family's holiday memorable this year. All inquiries are confidential. Please call 860-258-2799 and speak with Nicole to learn more about the program or adopt a family.

**Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at Brooklawn Funeral Home** – Wednesday, December 5, 2012. It is an evening of celebrating and remembering loved ones. Many families from your community will be in attendance this year. If you have any questions you can call Luke DiMaria at 860 721-0087.

**“Messiah” with CONCORA and The Hartford Symphony**, conducted by Richard Coffey, will come together in an intimate and inspirational setting to perform Handel's beloved classic, “Messiah” on Sunday, December 14, at 7pm at Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford. For tickets, contact the Hartford Symphony's box office at 860 244-2999 or purchase online at [www.hartfordsymphony.org](http://www.hartfordsymphony.org).

**“A Christmas Carol Sing”** on Friday, December 21 at 7pm at The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, Route 151 in Middle Haddam. For more information call 860 267-2828.



**Always Welcome!** – Hunger never takes a holiday... Food Pantries need our help to meet the food demands...Please consider bringing a non-perishable food item, laundry detergent, or baby items to worship every time you come. The large basket in the front foyer of the church welcomes all

food donations. Pew Crew members have been taking your donations to the food pantry. Mark Williams sends a thank you note every month in gratitude for your generosity.

**Yoga Offered by Core Power, LLC** – Experience the dynamic flow and challenge of yoga which builds strength, balance and flexibility for an overall fit and healthy body. Classes are for all-levels with options for everyone! This class meets: Monday evenings from 5:30-6:30pm, and Saturday mornings in from 8:30-9:15am. Contact Lynn MacDonald 860-550-4660 to register – Please bring water bottle, yoga mat, and a friend!!

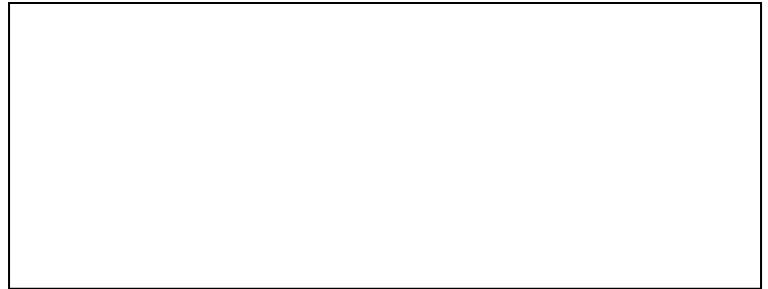
**ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill CT 06067  
Telephone # 860 529-4167

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No matter who you are,  
Or where you are on life's journey...  
You're welcome here.



**THINK SCRIP!!**

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**Blessed are You!**

**Advent Ecumenical**  
women's retreat

**Monday, December 3, 2012**  
**5:30 to 8:30 pm**

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

Join with other women of faith in prayer, conversation, and creative expression during the season of waiting and expectation. The evening program includes a light meal. Cost: \$15 and please bring a baby item (food, formula, diapers, clothing) to be donated to local charities. To register, send name, address, and church along with a check to 805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, attention Women's Retreat. If you would like to help hostess please call Stephanie Heneghan at 860 529-4672.