

*The First Sunday
of
Advent*



HOPE
November 30, 2025


Rocky River
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Est. @ 1751

Gathering

The Nursery is available for Infants-Kindergarten.

The Alternative Worship Room (105) is available for those with sensory needs.

Please silence your cell phones and refrain from talking.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please sign and pass the welcome pads located at the end of each pew.

You may also sign in electronically by scanning the code.



PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF THE HOPE CANDLE

Loretta and Bill Helmuth

One:

Today we light the first candle of Advent, the candle of **Hope**.

In a time when the world feels uncertain, God calls us to trust the promise of a Savior.

Scripture:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." — *Isaiah 9:2*

One:

We light this candle as a sign of our hope in God's coming kingdom.

(Light the first purple candle.)

Prayer:

Gracious God, as this candle shines, fill us with your hope.

Help us watch for you, trust in you, and follow the light you send.

Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

All: We wait with hope for the One who is coming.

† HYMN #88, Verses 1-3

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

† CALL TO CONFESSION

† ADVENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, you call us to stay awake, to keep watch for your coming, but we confess that we grow tired and distracted. We are lulled by the comforts of routine, by the noise of our schedules, by the worries we cling to more tightly than your promises. Forgive us for the ways we sleepwalk through our days—unaware of our neighbors, unresponsive to your Spirit, unready for the new thing you are doing among us. Wake us up Lord—to your mercy, to your presence, to your Advent among us and within us. Come to us again with your grace, and make us ready for the world you are bringing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

† A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

† ASSURANCE OF PARDON & PASSING THE PEACE

One: Friends believe the good news of the gospel.

All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

One: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Let us exchange a gesture of peace with our neighbors, and remain standing for our Response to Forgiveness.

† RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS *Gloria Patri* #581

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

Laura Smith

The Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION FOR ADVENT

Gracious God, as your Word is read and proclaimed, shine your light into our shadows. Wake us from all that dulls our hearts and slows our spirits. By your Holy Spirit, open our eyes to your coming, open our ears to your call, and open our lives to your transforming grace. Come, Lord Jesus—speak to us, and make us ready to receive you. Amen.

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 24:36–44

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Advent Hope

Joseph M. Martin

Choir

SERMON

“Keep Awake...Even When You Don’t Know Why”

Neal Carter

Responding to the Word

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (The Apostles’ Creed)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

† Please Stand • Congregation reads words in bold.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

† DOXOLOGY *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow* #606

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

† PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, you break into our world with mercy and hope, and you invite us to live, awake to your kingdom. Receive these gifts, and use them for your purposes—to shine light where there is darkness, to bring peace where there is fear, to stir hope where there is despair. As we offer our resources, we also offer our lives. Make us faithful stewards who watch for your coming and work for your justice, until Christ comes again in glory. In the name of our coming Lord, we pray. Amen.

Sending

† HYMN #88, Verses 4-7 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

† CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

† RESPONSE *While We Are Waiting, Come* #92, Verse 1

† POSTLUDE

ADVENT AT ROCKY RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SANCTUARY POINSETTIA DONATION

We will soon be ordering Poinsettias for the decoration of the sanctuary during Advent.

If you would like to make a **\$12** donation in honor or memory of someone, please complete a form and place it with your check or cash in the offering plate or give it directly to the church office.

A list of those honored and remembered will be in the bulletin on Christmas Eve. Funds collected will benefit the Harrisburg Crisis Assistance Ministry Food Pantry at RRPC. Submit your order by scanning the code or pick up an order form in the vestibule.

DEADLINE for ordering is Sunday, December 7.



TOYS FOR TOTS

December 14 - 15

4:00 - 7:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

SORT TOYS:

Immediately following worship on December 14 in the fellowship hall.

Distribution & Shop:

Sunday, December 14 & Monday, December 15

Help families shop and pick out toys!



See Nancy Tipton for details, ntipton71@gmail.com





CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTIONS MINISTRY



WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

Wednesday, Dec. 3
6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Menu: SOUPS

We ask for four people each week to bring a dessert. Please contact Nancy Tipton, ntipton71@gmail.com / 704-309-0369

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Men's Advent Study
Tuesdays, 12:30 pm - Session Room

The Men's Advent Study will begin on Tuesday, December 2, 2025 and be each week until December 23, 2025.

Studying: *The Weary World Rejoices* by Kate Bowler

This 24-day devotional points toward a future we can almost glimpse. Copies will be in the vestibule for pick up.



Women's Circle Meetings

Tuesday, December 2

Morning: 10:00 am, Session Room

Evening: 7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

All women are invited to join a circle!

Morning: Linda Clark, 704-458-2472

Evening: Elaine Vincent, 704-575-0396



Men's Breakfast

Sunday, Dec. 21, 9:00 am, Fellowship Hall

Men of all ages are invited to come and share in good food and fellowship. This breakfast is held the third Sunday of each month.

Questions? Contact Jerry Clark at 704-458-9233

RRPC's Bread Ministry

RRPC's Bread Ministry is looking for volunteers. This is a wonderful, welcoming ministry that provides the opportunity to meet and get to know our visitors.

The rotation for those providing bread is approximately once every four months. The loaves can be store bought, homemade, or from a mix.

Interested? Contact Priscilla Giuliano, tttandsp@gmail.com / 704-706-3203

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Please join us on Dec. 14th at 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall as the children present this year's Christmas program. There will be music, narration, and children in costumes! This will take the place of Sunday School that day. We hope you will all come to support our children.

Birthday Party for Jesus
Sunday, December 28, 2025

Children of all ages are invited to join us Dec. 28th following worship for a party to celebrate Jesus's birth! We will have a light lunch, games, crafts, and fun. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Please RSVP to laura.rrpc@gmail.com to let Laura Smith know how many will be attending so we'll have enough food for everyone.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Sign Up for the 2026 Youth Mission Trip
June 21–26, 2026



Join us for the 2026 Youth Mission Trip, happening June 21–26 in Western North Carolina.

Open to youth ages 14+ and adult leaders, this trip will focus on disaster relief efforts in communities still recovering from Hurricane Helene. The total cost is \$245 per person, with a \$100 deposit due by November 28 to hold your spot, with final payment due Feb. 27. We'll spend the week working on repair projects, sharing meals, worshipping together, and building lasting connections.

Sign up via the newsletter link or scan the QR code.

Questions? Contact Hailey Lebada at RockyRiverYouth@gmail.com.

White Elephant Youth Christmas Party
Sunday, December 7, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM, Fellowship Hall

Hey RRPC Youth, parents, and volunteers, get ready for an evening filled with laughter, festive fun, and the most creative gift exchanges of the season. Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater, bring a wrapped wacky gift (\$10 limit), and your holiday spirit.

Questions? Contact Hailey Lebada, RockyRiverYouth@gmail.com.

Billy Graham Library Christmas Visit
Friday, December 19, 2025

Experience the beauty of Christmas lights and decorations at the Billy Graham Library. A festive evening to celebrate the season together.

Youth Pantry Drive
NOV.: CANNED VEGGIES

SCAN THE CODE TO PURCHASE & SHIP DIRECTLY TO RRPC!
Questions - Hailey Lebada or email us at RockyRiverYouth@gmail.com.



Join the RRPC Youth Mailing List

Join our mailing list to stay connected and help shape the upcoming programs. Receive our weekly newsletter with updates and quick lessons for all ages. Scan the QR code or email RockyRiverYouth@gmail.com.

Veteran's Christmas Tree
Return bags before Dec. 7th

1. Select a tag from the tree
2. Sign out the tag on the forms on the table next to the tree. Put your name on the line next to the veteran's name. If you are not a member of RRPC, please put down a phone number.
3. Shop for the items on the list. You do not have to buy everything listed on the tag; these are suggestions.
4. Place them in a gift bag and put the tag on the bag so that it doesn't get detached and is visible. Please use a gift bag so we can add any extra items that are donated.
5. Return the bags to the church on or before **December 7th**.

You are welcome to add a Christmas card if you desire. Our veterans ask for very little, please feel free to add items not on the tag. Personal hygiene items, socks, candy and gift cards are always good ideas. Gift cards to Walmart are the best since the stores are everywhere and they can use them for goods, groceries and prescriptions.

You can donate items even if you can't adopt a whole tag or put extra items in a grocery bag marked "Extra".

If you have any questions or need help, please contact Ben Schneider at bschneider73@gmail.com or 980-258-9267

Our Session		
CLASS OF 2025	CLASS OF 2026	CLASS OF 2027
Scott Jones <i>Finance and Administration</i>	Sandra Thomas <i>Finance & Administration</i>	Shirley Rockel <i>Finance & Administration</i>
Reggie Hunnicutt <i>Worship</i>	Priscilla Giuliano <i>Worship</i>	Barbara Whaley <i>Worship</i>
Nancy Tipton, Clerk of Session <i>Congregational Connections</i>	Joe Novobilski <i>Congregational Connections</i>	Robert Remsburg <i>Congregational Connections</i>
Billy Carriker <i>Building and Grounds</i>	Steve Irminger <i>Building and Grounds</i>	David Murray <i>Building and Grounds</i>
Amy Huster <i>Christian Education</i>	Theresa Watson <i>Christian Education</i>	Nicole Schneider <i>Christian Education</i>

COMMITTEES MEETING SCHEDULE	Building and Grounds:	The 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
	Worship:	The 3rd Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m.
	Finance & Administration:	The 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
	Christian Education:	The 2nd Sunday of each month at 9:00 a.m.
	Congregational Connections:	The 2nd Sunday of each month at 9:00 a.m.

Volunteer Schedules

Counters		WNF Set-Up	WNF Clean-Up
Week 1:	Joe Novobilski and Sandra Thomas	Week 1: C3	Irminger
Week 2:	Steve Jewett and Kathy Linker	Week 2: Daoust	Troops 7 and 83
Week 3:	Shirley Rockel and Darrell Thomas	Week 3: (Open)	Mitchem / Carter
Week 4:	Scott Jones and Frank Reynolds	Week 4: (Open)	Whaley/ Bedsole/ Glosson
Week 5:	Bob Remsburg and Don Chase	Week 5: Tipton	Tipton / Earley

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2025 BUDGET:	\$459,641
TOTAL GIVEN YTD:	\$400,294
NEEDED EACH MONTH:	\$38,303
TOTAL FOR NOV.:	\$37,976
NEEDED WEEKLY:	\$8,839
TOTAL FOR NOV. 23:	\$7,670

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Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Neal Carter • 704.455.2479 or 910.280.9688 • nealcarter64@gmail.com
Church Administrator: Macie Melton • 704.455.2479 • churchadmin@rockyriver.org
Music and Children's Ministries: Laura Smith • 704.796.3198 • laura.rrpc@gmail.com
Youth Ministry: Hailey Lebada • 704.455.2479 • rockyriveryouth@gmail.com

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.