

*The Third Sunday
of
Advent*



JOY
December 14, 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 JOY CANDLE

Stephanie Klein

One:

Today we light the candle of **Joy**.

Joy is not something we manufacture; it is a gift God gives.

Scripture:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” — *Philippians 4:4*

One:

We light this candle remembering that Christ brings joy even in the midst of ordinary days.

(Light the first, second purple candles, and pink “Joy” candle.)

Prayer:

God of joy, brighten our spirits with your good news. Lift our hearts, and help us rejoice in your presence. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

All: The joy of the Lord is our strength.

† HYMN #105

People, Look East

† CALL TO CONFESSION

† ADVENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of promise and fulfillment, in this season of waiting we confess that we prefer certainty to mystery, and clarity to trust. Like John, we want answers that fit our expectations, a Messiah who arrives on our terms, a kingdom that comes without discomfort or change. But you come among us in ways we do not expect: in mercy rather than might, in healing rather than spectacle, in vulnerability rather than victory. Forgive us when we fail to see your presence because we are looking for the wrong signs. Forgive our impatience, our doubt, our fear. Open our eyes to the quiet ways you heal, to the gentle ways you save, to the subtle ways your kingdom breaks into our world. In Christ our Lord 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

God of Advent light, as Scripture is read and proclaimed, shine your truth upon us. Where we are confused, give us clarity. Where we are anxious, give us peace. Where we doubt, give us faith. Open our hearts by your Holy Spirit so that we may recognize the signs of your kingdom—in our lives, in our community, and in the world you love. Through Jesus Christ, the coming One. Amen.

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 11:2–11

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Like a Child, I Wait
Choir

Ruth E. Schram

SERMON

“Maybe Not What We Expected”

Neal Carter

Responding to the Word

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *From A Brief Statement of Faith*

We trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Word made flesh, who came to proclaim good news to the poor, release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. He lived among us full of grace and truth, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and welcomed sinners. Condemned and forsaken, he was faithful even unto death. God raised him from the dead, breaking the power of sin and evil, and declaring the dawn of the new creation. We trust in him, our Lord and Messiah, who reigns with compassion, who comes to us still, and who will come again in glory. In life and in death, we belong to God. 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 bring good news to the poor and healing to the brokenhearted. Take these gifts and use them to reveal your coming kingdom: a kingdom where mercy triumphs, where hope takes root, and where your love transforms the world. Make us faithful stewards of all we have, that our giving may be a sign of our trust in the Messiah who is already at work among us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Sending

† HYMN #132 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

† CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

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

† POSTLUDE

Attendance for Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025

Sanctuary: 142 Online: 60

Interested in membership?

Contact our Church Administrator to arrange a meeting with Pastor Neal Carter.

704-455-2479 or churchadmin@rockyriver.org

ADVENT AT ROCKY RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH





CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTIONS MINISTRY



RRPC Blood Drive

Tuesday, Dec. 23

2:00 - 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Rocky River to schedule an appointment.



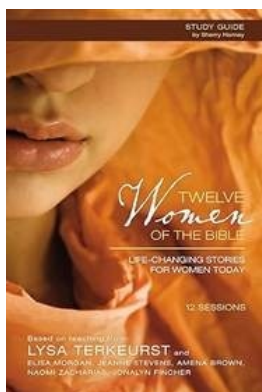


Men's Breakfast

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



Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study

Jan. 6, 2026 - 9:00 AM

Room 216 - 2nd floor

Twelve Women of the Bible by Lysa Terkeurst, Elisa Morgan, et.al. and the study guide by Sherry Harney.

For further information contact Barbara Whaley at mbwhaley@ctc.net

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 or homemade.

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

There will be no further Wednesday Night Fellowship until the new year. Also, no Handbell or Choir rehearsals after December 17, 2025, until the first week of January.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

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

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.

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 January 1, 2026 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.

Youth Pantry Drive
DEC.: SHAMPOO

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.


An advertisement for the Morning Coffee Cart. The background is a scenic sunrise over a valley. In the foreground, a white coffee cup sits on a saucer on a wooden table. The text "MORNING COFFEE CART!" is prominently displayed at the top in large, white, outlined letters. Below it, smaller text reads "Provided By: Wonderfully Made Bakery and Coffee Co." and "Wednesday & Friday 6:30 AM - 10:00 AM".

MORNING COFFEE CART!


Provided By:
Wonderfully Made Bakery and
Coffee Co.

Wednesday & Friday
6:30 AM - 10:00 AM

An advertisement for the YMCA Active Older Adult Fitness program. It features the YMCA logo and the SilverSneakers logo at the top. The title "ACTIVE OLDER ADULT FITNESS" is written in large, bold, teal letters. Below the title is a photo of four older adults (three women and one man) smiling and exercising. To the right of the photo, the schedule "Monday thru Wednesday 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall" is listed in blue text.

 **The YMCA @ Rocky River Presbyterian Church** 

**ACTIVE OLDER ADULT
FITNESS**

 **Monday thru Wednesday
9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall**

A sign for the Harrisburg Crisis Assistance Ministry Food Pantry, set against a background of shelves stocked with various food items like canned soups and pasta. The sign features a logo of two stylized figures holding hands in a heart shape, the text 'HARRISBURG CRISIS ASSISTANCE MINISTRY' and 'FOOD PANTRY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE', a QR code, and the schedule 'MONDAYS, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.'. The Rocky River Presbyterian Church logo and name are also present.



**HARRISBURG CRISIS
ASSISTANCE MINISTRY**

FOOD PANTRY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

FOOD PANTRY



MONDAYS,
9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.


Rocky River
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Est. @ 1751

BUILDING & GROUNDS MINISTRY

NEW PLAYGROUND PROJECT!

RRPC's Building & Grounds Ministry has begun work to rebuild our playground!

Your donations will help provide a safe, functional place for children to play.

Scan the code to donate, write "Playground" on your check, or give online at www.rockyriver.org/give

A sign for the RRPC Playground Fun Raiser, featuring a background of green grass. On the left is a photo of the playground with a QR code overlaid. Below the photo is the text 'SCAN TO GIVE' with a white arrow pointing right. On the right side, the text 'RRPC PLAYGROUND FUN RAISER' is written in large, white, serif capital letters. The Rocky River Presbyterian Church logo is also visible.


Rocky River
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SCAN TO GIVE



**RRPC
PLAYGROUND
FUN
RAISER**

| 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> |

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| 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

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|--------------------|-----------|
| 2025 BUDGET: | \$459,641 |
| TOTAL GIVEN YTD: | \$415,320 |
| NEEDED EACH MONTH: | \$38,303 |
| TOTAL FOR DEC.: | \$8,903 |
| NEEDED WEEKLY: | \$8,839 |
| TOTAL FOR DEC. 7: | \$8,903 |

Rocky River Presbyterian Church • 7940 Rocky River Road • Concord NC 28025
www.rockyriver.org • 704.455.2479 • fax: 704.455.2489

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.