

Established @ 1751



Morning Worship at Rocky River Presbyterian Church Sunday, December 28, 2025 The First Sunday After Christmas 11:00 AM

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

CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 148)

One: Praise the Lord from the heavens!

All: Praise God in the heights!

One: Praise the Lord, all you angels, all shining stars!

All: Praise God, sun and moon, all you blazing lights!

One: Let every creature on earth and under the earth praise the Lord!

All: Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!

One: We worship the God who came near,

All: who dwells with us, and who calls us to praise!

† HYMN #119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

† CALL TO CONFESSION

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, You came among us in humility and love, bearing our weakness and our flesh. Yet we confess that we often seek you only where life is tidy, comfortable, or controlled. We confess that we withdraw from suffering we do not understand, and we remain silent where justice calls us to speak. Forgive us for loving distance more than presence, safety more than solidarity, comfort more than compassion. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger, who sleep in the cold, who struggle against despair. Make our lives living echoes of your incarnation, where love takes flesh in acts of mercy and justice. 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

Living God, by your Spirit open our hearts and minds to receive your Word. Let your Scriptures speak into our lives with clarity and power. May the story of your Son's incarnation inspire us to see your presence among us and to live as your faithful disciples in a world that longs for mercy, healing, and hope. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 63: 7-9

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Hebrews 2: 10-18

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

" Jesus, What a Wonderful Child "

arr. by Marty Parks

Choir

SERMON "Escaping Heaven" Neal Carter

Responding to the Word

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from a Brief Statement of Faith)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. In life and in death we belong to God. Amen.

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

ANTHEM

† 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

God of mercy, from your fullness we have all received grace upon grace. Bless these gifts, and use them to uplift the weak, shelter the vulnerable, and restore dignity to those whom the world forgets. May these offerings be signs of your incarnate love in action, that through them your compassion may transform lives. Amen.

Sending

- † HYMN #128 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
- **† CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**
- † RESPONSE Go, Tell It on the Mountain #136, Refrain
- † POSTLUDE

Attendance for Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025

Sanctuary: 161 Online: 46

Interested in membership?

Contact our Church Administrator to arrange a meeting with Pastor Neal Carter. 704-455-2479 or churchadmin@rockyriver.org

Annual Congregational Meeting

Session has called a Congregational Meeting for the purpose of reporting the Annual 2026 Budget, and this will include the 2026 Corporation Meeting on January 4, 2026.

Please refer to the insert in regard to the 2026 Congregational Budget.

Church offices will be closed December 31 - Jan. 1 for the holiday.



CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTIONS MINISTRY



WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026 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



RRPC Blood Drive

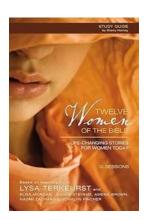
Tuesday, Dec. 30 2:00 - 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

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



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY





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 rnbwhaley@ctc.net



Women's Circle Meetings

Tuesday, Jan. 6

Morning: 10:00 am, Session Room Evening: 7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

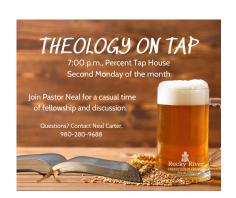
All women are invited to join a circle! Morning: Linda Clark, 704-458-2472 Evening: Elaine Vincent, 704-575-0396



Game Night Friday, Jan. 9, 2026, at 7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Adults gather for board and card games the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month! No registration required. All are welcome for a bit of laughs and friendly competition!

Questions? Contact Priscilla Giuliano, 704-706-3203



Theology On Tap Monday, Jan. 12, 7:00 p.m., Percent Tap House

Join Pastor Neal for a casual time of fellowship and discussion. This gathering is held the second Monday of each month.

Questions? Contact Neal Carter, 980-280-9688

Taco Tuesday Tuesday, Jan. 13, 7:00 p.m., La Unica

Young adults, join Pastor Neal for a casual time of tacos and discussion. Let's Taco 'Bout It!

Questions? Contact Neal Carter, 980-280-9688

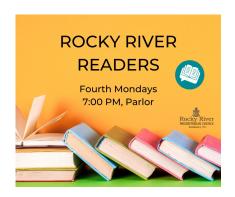




Men's Breakfast Sunday, Jan. 18, 9:00 am, Fellowship Hall

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



Rocky River Readers Monday, Jan. 26, 7:00 pm, Parlor

Traveling Through History by Janet Morrison

View the 2026 reading list at www.rockyriver.org/connect/rocky-river-readers. Questions? Contact Priscilla Giuliano, 704-706-3203

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 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

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, worshiping 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.



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



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

COMMITTEES
MEETING
SCHEDULE

Building and Grounds: Worship: Finance & Administration:

Christian Education:
Congregational Connections:

The 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. The 3rd Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. The 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The 2nd Sunday of each month at 9:00 a.m. The 2nd Sunday of each month at 9:00 a.m.

Volunteer Schedules

Volunte et Scheudies					
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:	\$431,242			
NEEDED EACH MONTH:	\$38,303			
TOTAL FOR DEC.:	\$24,825			
NEEDED WEEKLY:	\$8,839			
TOTAL FOR DEC. 21:	\$7,567			

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.