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**A Message From the Pastor - Neal Carter**

**2 Peter 3: 3 - 4, 8 -10**

<sup>3</sup>First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts <sup>4</sup>and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!"

<sup>8</sup>But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Advent is here. The first season of the Church Calendar. Advent is a season of preparation. We are to prepare for the Lord to come—to arrive the first time in the Nativity; moreover, we are to prepare for the Lord to come again—however that may look.

But, as usual, when it comes to time, folks get antsy. They (we) want to know when things are going to begin to happen. According to Peter's second letter, he points out that at some point, folks will begin to question if Christ is going to come back after all. Even in first and second centuries, people were already beginning to expect him to return. For them, things are now as they have been for a long time. For them, it seems, if Christ was going to come, he would have already arrived. Christ must just simply be slow.

Now, Peter never says that Christ is not slow in his Advent return; he simply indicates that the Lord is not merely slow about his promise, as some might think of slowness. He is not simply doddering. Peter also reminds them that Christ is much bigger than our perspectives of time by a big margin - <sup>8</sup>But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

"The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness . . . ." Minus the punchline of the old fable of the *Tortoise and the Hare*, most of us never wish to be associated with the term "slow." We never wish to be seen as left behind the others, or unproductive compared to our peers. Most of us, I think, wish to be recognized as up-to-date, or *on point* (as my daughter says). We know what we are doing. We are not behind.

Our passage tells us that God has no self-esteem issues with the notion of being "slow" about Jesus' promised soon return. God is willing to risk that to assure us extra time to prepare for Christ's arrival. In this instance, speed is not of the essence. God's slow approach is *on point*. God's merciful patience with us is truly an amazing graceful present in a season of many gifts. In this holiday season that is filled with rush and high-paced activities in the dash to Christmas, shall we steal away several moments when we can get them to appreciate God's slowness so that we might prepare for Christ's coming. May our lives even reflect God's slowness toward us and others by embracing the gift of the Advent season—the season to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming.



**Holiday Happenings - Quick List**

- December 2** - 1st Sunday of Advent—begin reading RRPC Devotional, Advent Walk 6:00pm
- December 7** - Ring the Bells at Lowe's Foods
- December 9** - Cantata during worship • Open House at Manse 2:30—4:30 • All Angel Tree gifts returned
- December 15** - Keeping the Hope Christmas Dinner 6:00pm
- December 16** - Christmas Concert & Tea 3:00pm
- December 23** - Youth Christmas Program 10:00am • No Sunday School
- December 24** - Christmas Eve Service 5:30pm



The Twelve Questions of Advent Quiz – from Pittsburgh Seminary (PCUSA)

1. What does the word “advent” mean?
2. What is the difference between “Advent” (capital “A”) and “Nativity” (capital “N”)?
3. True or False: Advent, which leads up to Christmas on December 25th, constitutes the first season of the Christian church year.
4. The account of Jesus’ birth is recorded in which of the Gospels?
5. What is the name of the angel who spoke to John the Baptist’s father, Zacharias, and to Jesus’ mother, Mary, to announce the coming births of John and Jesus?
6. True or False: We know that John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins.
7. Which ruling Roman Caesar ordered the census that required Joseph to take Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem so as to register for it?
8. What Hebrew king is associated with Jesus’ birthplace, Bethlehem, and what is that city also called?
9. One Gospel account of the nativity mentions angels announcing Jesus’ birth to shepherds, who then go to visit the baby. The other account mentions something else instead. What is that something else?
10. Herod is mentioned as being “king of Judea” when Jesus was born. Of the six Herods named in the New Testament, which Herod figures in the nativity story: Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, Herod the Great, Herod Philip, Herod Agrippa I, Herod Agrippa II?
11. True or False: George Frideric Handel’s famous oratorio Messiah premiered in Dublin, Ireland, as the composer’s offering for the Advent season.
12. In A Charlie Brown Christmas, which Peanuts cartoon character recites the account of the Nativity, and from which Gospel does that character quote?

(The answers are hidden throughout the newsletter!)

December Birthdays

Name	Birthday	Name	Birthday
Sgt. Lauren Wells	12/1	Maggie Linker	12/20
Frank Reynolds	12/4	Kenyon Young	12/21
Bethaney Wells	12/7	Wes Abernethy	12/22
Steven Mott	12/8	Deborah Carter	12/22
Helene Linenberger	12/9	Butch McDonald	12/22
Kenneth Freeman	12/11	Blaise Smith	12/24
Dan Farrell	12/12	Jim Lyerly	12/27
Leslie Porfeli - Kenney	12/12	Mick Wakeman	12/27
Harlan Hoover	12/13	Matt Jenkins	12/27
Laura Linker	12/14	Joan Nicholson	12/27
Ted Dickason	12/16	Katelyn Bechtol	12/28
Harold Melvin	12/17	Priscilla Clawson	12/29
Ryan Farrell	12/17	Ralph Theroux	12/29
ILT Margaret Jones	12/18	Lynn Query	12/30
Ann Flowe Glosson	12/19	Trent Savelle	12/31
Kim Burr	12/19		

This list was generated from our Church Windows database. If I have missed someone I apologize sincerely! Please let me know if anyone is missing from this list and send the correct information to [churchadmin@rockyriver.org](mailto:churchadmin@rockyriver.org) so I can update our records.

Events

Presbyterian Women Morning & Evening Circles

All women are invited the first Tuesday of each month for study and fellowship. This month we meet on December 11.

Tuesday, December 11

Morning Circle: 11:30a.m., Harbor Inn

Evening Circle: 6:00 p.m., the home of Shirley Rockel

All of the women of the church are invited and encouraged to be a part of the Presbyterian Women Circle and Bible Studies. We strive to minister to the congregation as a whole and to the women in particular through Bible study, prayer and fellowship. We would love to welcome some new faces to our groups! We meet the first Tuesday of each month.

Questions? Please contact Priscilla Giuliano at 704-706-3203/tttandsp@gmail.com

4. The account of Jesus’ birth is recorded in which of the Gospels? ([Matthew and Luke](#))

Rocky River Readers

Rocky River Readers will not meet in December. We will begin again in January and are always glad to welcome new members for our discussions. If you have any book suggestions for 2019 please contact Marie Morrison.

Questions? Please contact Marie Morrison at 704-455-2487/ morrison1960@windstream.net

Men’s Breakfast

The Men’s Breakfast will be held on Sunday, December 16 at 9:00a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

As always, we welcome ALL men to join us—husbands, fathers, sons, grandfathers and brothers. What a great opportunity for fellowship among our men!

Questions? Please contact Jerry Clark at 704-596-0062/gclark6@bellsouth.net

Service Volunteers

Chiming the Hour	A Time for Children	Bread Ministry	Worship Assistants
December 2 Colton Heavey	December 2 Tommy Heavey	December 2 Laura Carriker	December 2 Kathy Linker
December 9 Isabella Rockel	December 9 Julie Alexander	December 9 Priscilla Giuliano	December 9 Candice Shepard
December 16 Anna Talton	December 16 Vance Horton	December 16 Ann Glosson	December 16 Emma Wakeman
December 23 James Ide	December 23 Jerry Clark	December 23 Jean Hager	December 23 Gigi Hunnicutt
December 31 Colton Heavey	December 30 Neal Carter	December 30 Cathy Jewett	December 30 Ben Burr

Infant Nursery

December 2 Mandy Williams
December 9 Kenza Mitchem
December 16 Beau & Jane Talton
December 23 Rex and Ashley Carriker
December 30 DeDe Dickason, Trinity and Savannah

Toddler Nursery

December 2 Chris & Magan Bechtol
December 9 Laura Milliken and Carol Lyerly
December 16 Dave and Phyllis Miller
December 23 Tommy and Erica Heavey
December 31 Candice, Maggie and Ellie Shepard

Ushers

- 1st Sunday: Lead: Butch McDonald, Danny Tankersley, Jim Pharr, Ruth McDonald, Patrick Spickard
- 2nd Sunday: Lead: Ted Dickason, Jeff Thomas, Dave Mowery, Thomas Linker, Bob Windell
- 3rd Sunday: Lead: Steve Jewett, Tim or Dianne Savelle, Joey Dulin, Joe Novobilski, Dori or Scott Swaringen
- 4th Sunday: Lead: Reggie Hunnicutt, Chris Bechtol, Dave Miller, Jim Stafford, King McCachren

## 2018 Stewardship Summary

## Events

2018 PROPOSED BUDGET: \$382,667 ACTUAL YTD: 312,044			
NEEDED PER MONTH: \$31,888			
NEEDED PER WEEK: \$7,358			
WEEK	GIVING	DIFFERENCE FOR WEEK +/-	DIFFERENCE FOR MONTH +/-
11/04/2018	\$17,183	+\$9,825	-\$14,705
11/11/2018	\$4,509	-\$2,849	-\$10,196
11/18/2018	\$4,542	-\$2,816	-\$5,654
11/25/2018	\$6,775	-\$583	+\$1,121

### Education Building

Loan as of 11/24/2018 \$ 349,551

We are truly blessed here at Rocky River to have the new education building. We would ask everyone to pray we will get the additional funds needed to pay down what we still owe. If you have chosen not make a pledge but would like to make a donation to help pay down the debt, just write "Building Fund" on your check and we will apply it to our debt. Thank you all for your generosity.

1. What does the word "advent" mean? ([the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event](#))

### ANOTHER WAY TO GIVE PUT AWAY YOUR CHECKBOOK AND MAKE A GIFT TO ROCKY RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH!

If you have appreciated securities, mutual funds, or property, consider gifting the shares or property directly to Rocky River. This donation will allow you to avoid the tax on the gain in the asset, while getting a FULL charitable donation against your taxes. You don't pay the taxes due, and Rocky River converts the shares or property TAX-FREE. Everyone wins (except Uncle Sam).

Here's the way it worked for Bob, a client of mine:

Bob has a mutual fund account that has done well over the years and has grown in value. Bob regularly gives to his church... usually by writing a check straight out of his monthly income. With the above strategy of gifting an appreciated asset, he can determine what his gift to the church will be and give the equivalent value directly to the church IN SHARES. He will now get the FULL donated value against his taxes, and the church (which does not pay capital gains or income taxes) converts the shares to cash and gets the FULL value from the conversion. NO TAXES ARE PAID! Bob has reduced his capital gains bill from the appreciated mutual fund account AND given full value to his church! As I said.... win, win....(except for dear old Uncle Sam).

Also, REMEMBER!

The Qualified Charitable Donation legislation has been made PERMANENT by Congress! If you don't need your RMD (required minimum distribution) from your IRA to live on, consider donating directly to RRPC and avoid the taxation on your withdrawal from your IRA. Requirements: you must be 70 1/2 or older, and are limited to \$100,000 per year. This strategy may also save on taxation of your social security benefits, may help with adjusted gross income (AGI) limitations, and may save on medicare insurance premiums!

Questions? Contact Reggie Hunnicutt at [reghunnicutt@gmail.com](mailto:reghunnicutt@gmail.com) or 704-763-0638

9. One Gospel account of the nativity mentions angels announcing Jesus' birth to shepherds, who then go to visit the baby. The other account mentions something else instead. What is that something else? ([the visit of magi, or Wise Men, from the East](#))

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP MEALS

6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall  
COST: \$5/meal, \$15/family maximum  
The caterer donates \$1 from every \$5 collected back to the Youth group!

ALL ARE INVITED!

#### Menu For December

December 5 - Soups, Salads and Desserts

**Free Community Meal**

December 12 - Pinto Beans with Ham

December 19 - Poppy Seed Chicken

December 26- No Wednesday Night Dinner

To RSVP, indicate how many will be coming when you sign the attendance book or call the office.



Sunday December 16 at 3:00pm

Join us for an afternoon of fellowship, refreshments, and wonderful holiday music. You will hear from our very own RRPC choir and handbells. There is NO CHARGE for this event and we hope you will make this a family tradition to help you celebrate the Christmas season!!

If you can help with this event or would like to provide finger sandwiches or desserts please contact Carol Lyerly at 704-455-5892.



### Free Community Meal - Wednesday December 5 at 6:00pm

First Wednesday Each Month, 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

This month we are serving homemade soups, salads and desserts. We have seen an increase in the number of people attending this Free meal, and it has become a great way to connect with folks in our community. Please continue to invite anyone in the community that may have trouble feeding their family or need fellowship. Wednesdays are definitely becoming the new Sunday, and our church family is growing because of this! We always have room for one more!

### COMMUNITY DINNER

Note: Food will not be put away until 7:00 p.m. to accommodate those who cannot arrive earlier. **December, January, February and March - Soups, Salads and Dessert We ask for volunteers to bring soups and desserts during these months. Contact Cyndi in the office if you can help.**

5. What is the name of the angel who spoke to John the Baptist's father, Zacharias, and to Jesus' mother, Mary, to announce the coming births of John and Jesus? ([Gabriel](#))



29 women went to Montreat this past November. Amy Hicks was our spiritual leader again with her lesson named "Just call me I-lean". We learned that we can "lean" on God, not only in bad times, but also in good times, and to trust Him at all times. We decorated over 160 Christmas cards, most of which went to Hope Cancer Ministries, that supports cancer patients, their families and their caregivers. Several of the cards also went to our home bound women, in the

Christmas baskets that the women's circles put together. In addition, we donated 12 flannel blankets and numerous tubes of sewn fleece for IV covers, to Jeff Gordon Children's Hospital. Thank you to all, for a wonderful 2018 retreat.

**Salvation Army Ring the Bells** - RRPC will Ring the Bell at Lowe's foods on Friday Dec. 7th, from 10:00am to 9:00pm each day. We still have a couple hours open on Friday, December 7. Please call Cyndi in the office if you can help. This is a great opportunity for a family to volunteer together for a worthy cause.

Theology on Tap with Neal will be held Monday, December 10 at 7:00pm. We meet at Vortex Bottle Shop in Harrisburg. Come and enjoy a lively discussion centered around life and theology. All are welcome!!

# Church Life

## Buildings and Grounds News

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS NEWS – Reviewed the 2019 landscape contract proposal and some revisions were suggested. Joey Dulin made several trips to the sanctuary this past month to repair the furnace. Thank you for all you do, Joey. It is possible that a recent filling of the fuel tank stirred up sediment from the bottom. We will begin in 2019 filling the tank in the summer to allow time for the sediment to settle. Jim Pharr repaired the broken gate at the cemetery. Thank you, Jim. The gas fireplace log at the manse has failed and has been replaced. Discussed the needed repair of the manse soffit. We will seek bids for repair. A traffic accident occurred in the new cemetery across the road, damaging several headstones. Jim Pharr is working with law enforcement and the insurance company to assure that repairs are made. Work has begun to remodel of the youth area kitchen.

An AAU softball team has approached RRPC with a proposal to improve and use the softball field at the scout area. A plan will be presented to Session in December.

As always, if you have energy, talents or gifts to share we can always use volunteers, so please talk with Billy Carriker, Jim Rockel or Jim Pharr.

### Committee chairpersons can be reached at:

Billy Carriker, (980) 521-5457/[billy@reedycreeklandl.com](mailto:billy@reedycreeklandl.com)

Jim Rockel, (319) 850-1335/[jrockel@hotmail.com](mailto:jrockel@hotmail.com)

Jim Pharr, (980) 329-6225/[jpharr@aol.com](mailto:jpharr@aol.com)

7. Which ruling Roman Caesar ordered the census that required Joseph to take Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem so as to register for it? (*Augustus*)



Did you know you can access our church directory on your smartphone or home computer? You can find a telephone number or address of a member just by clicking a button! Find the Instant Church Directory app on your smartphone or computer and follow the instructions for Log In and you will have all the information at your fingertips! We update the information as

soon as we receive changes from members, and we are still in the process of updating photos. If you notice that your photo is missing or is out of date, please send me a new one electronically or find Steve Mitchem on a Sunday morning and he will take a new picture of you! If you would rather have a printed copy of the directory, just ask Cyndi in the office and she will print one for you.

**If you have any questions or aren't sure how to get started call Cyndi in the office at 704-455-2479.**

**Elder Class of 2021** - Congratulations to the Elder Class of 2021: Allison Harris, Bo Geist, Carol Lyerly, Cindy Spickard and King McCachren. Installation of new elders will take place during worship service on January 6th.

## Prayer Requests

**Please Keep in Your Prayers:** Jeannette Lefler, sister of Dale Ritchie; Steven Mowery, father of Dave Mowery; Kylie Wilson, friend of the Giuliano's; Kathy Hoover; Theresa Hively and Jacob Roberts, friends of Traci Bird; Rick Rhodes, uncle of Traci Bird, Linda McCachren; Randy Baker, father of Delaney who attends our youth group; Don and Pat Bechtol, parents of Chris Bechtol; Frank Graham (former member); Keith Long, son of Darlene Chase; Buddy Holson, friend of Jimmy Stafford and Mary Litteral; John Rankin; Michelle Pena Clark, daughter-in-law of Jerry and Linda Clark; Phyllis Griffin; Teresa Faw, family of Alice Williams; Kay Jenkins, friend of Jerry Clark; Neil Cochran; Amber Ritter, co-worker of Deb Carter; Harley and Teresa Vea, friends of Janet Little; Margaret Hale; Bob D'Ameilo, friend of Laura Milliken; Anna Melvin; Shorty McCachren; Mandy Ide; Pat McDonald; Marie Hildreth; Bob Boswell, father of Dori Swaringen; Wes Abernathy; Benita Schirtzinger, mother of Darren Bird; Sam Peterson, friend of Priscilla Giuliano; Ann Jones, daughter of Ray and Priscilla Clawson; Sonya Moorehead, friend of Jerry Clark; Lindy and Helene Linenberger; Jim Busse, friend of Stephanie Campbell; Amy Hicks; Brendan Milliken; Marlene Howard; Kay Nalbhone; Jimmy McDonald; Linda Modzelesky; Bob Brombacher; Teresa Williams.

6. True or False: We know that John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins. (*False. They are often presumed to be cousins because of the biological relationship we are told their mothers [Elizabeth and Mary] had, but we do not know for certain what their exact relationship was.*)

## Scripture Readings for the month of December

11. True or False: George Frideric Handel's famous oratorio *Messiah* premiered in Dublin, Ireland, as the composer's offering for the Advent season. (*False—Messiah was originally intended as an offering for Easter, though it did premiere in Dublin, in 1742.*)

<b>Saturday, December 1</b>	<b>Zechariah 14:12-21 and Luke 19:41-48</b>
<b>Sunday, December 2</b>	<b>Isaiah 1:1-9 and Matthew 25:1-13</b>
<b>Monday, December 3</b>	<b>Isaiah 1:10-20 and Luke 20:1-8</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 4</b>	<b>Isaiah 1:21-31 and Luke 20:9-18</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 5</b>	<b>Isaiah 2:1-4 and Luke 20:19-26</b>
<b>Thursday, December 6</b>	<b>Isaiah 2:5-22 and Luke 20:27-40</b>
<b>Friday, December 7</b>	<b>Isaiah 3:1-4:1 and Luke 20:41-21:4</b>
<b>Saturday, December 8</b>	<b>Isaiah 4:2-6 and Luke 21:5-19</b>
<b>Sunday, December 9</b>	<b>Isaiah 5:1-7 and Luke 7:28-35</b>
<b>Monday, December 10</b>	<b>Isaiah 5:8-17 and Luke 21:20-28</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 11</b>	<b>Isaiah 5:18-25 and Luke 21:29-38</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 12</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:1-13 and John 7:53-8:11</b>
<b>Thursday, December 13</b>	<b>Isaiah 7:1-9 and Luke 22:1-13</b>
<b>Friday, December 14</b>	<b>Isaiah 7:10-25 and Luke 22:14-30</b>
<b>Saturday, December 15</b>	<b>Isaiah 8:1-15 and Luke 22:31-38</b>
<b>Sunday, December 16</b>	<b>Isaiah 13:1-13 and John 3:22-30</b>
<b>Monday, December 17</b>	<b>Isaiah 8:16-9:1 and Luke 22:39-53</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 18</b>	<b>Isaiah 11:1-9 and John 3:16-21</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 19</b>	<b>Isaiah 11:10-16 and John 5:30-47</b>
<b>Thursday, December 20</b>	<b>Isaiah 28:9-22 and Luke 1:5-25</b>
<b>Friday, December 21</b>	<b>Isaiah 29:9-24 and Luke 1:26-38</b>
<b>Saturday, December 22</b>	<b>Isaiah 31:1-9 and Luke 1:39-48a (48b-56)</b>
<b>Sunday, December 23</b>	<b>Isaiah 33:17-22 and Luke 1:57-66</b>
<b>Monday, December 24</b>	<b>Isaiah 35:1-10 and Luke 1:67-80</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 25</b>	<b>Zechariah 2:10-13 and John 3:31-36</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 26</b>	<b>2 Chronicles 24:17-22 and Acts 7:59-8:8</b>
<b>Thursday, December 27</b>	<b>Proverbs 8:22-30 and John 13:20-35</b>
<b>Friday, December 28</b>	<b>Isaiah 49:13-23 and Matthew 18:1-14</b>
<b>Saturday, December 29</b>	<b>Isaiah 12:1-6 and John 7:37-52</b>
<b>Sunday, December 30</b>	<b>Isaiah 62:6-7, 10-12 and Matthew 1:18-25</b>
<b>Monday, December 31</b>	<b>Isaiah 26:1-6 and John 8:12-19</b>

8. What Hebrew king is associated with Jesus' birthplace, Bethlehem, and what is that city also called? (*David—Bethlehem is also referred to as the City of David.*)



## Epiphany Party - Sunday January 6, 2019 at 6:00pm

Join us for supper and lots of fun activities!!

An epiphany is defined as a moment in which you suddenly see or understand something in a new way. Epiphany is celebrated every year on January 6<sup>th</sup>, remembering when the Magi followed the star to find the Christ Child and then carried their newfound wisdom of the infant King out into the world. Let's come together to celebrate the spread of the true Light over all the world.

**Advent Devotionals** - The Advent Devotionals are printed and ready for you to take home. This booklet is a tool for you to use to help you prepare for Advent, Christmastide and the Epiphany. Members of the congregation, session and staff contributed to this project and we hope you find their words inspiring. Thank you to everyone that wrote a devotional and to Anna Talton for creating the cover this year. The devotional books are available in the office or vestibule.

# Youth

## Youth News

from JD McNutt, Youth Director

I was walking in the store the other day and I found myself humming along to a Christmas song playing over the speakers. I had not been paying much attention to what was playing at the store. The song just kind of snuck up on me. All of a sudden I am dancing in the aisles to a Christmas tune.

I'll tell you what else snuck up on me the other day and it was a shock! I was walking the dogs and there is one of these huge snowmen in a front yard as we turned a corner. This thing is huge and has got to be like 10' tall. And it was on a hill which made it seem even taller, like 20'...maybe 50' tall. It has these red lights that go back and forth like the snowman is smiling or laughing. I'm not sure what it is doing. All I know is that thing creeps me out....

Anyhow, back to Christmas sneaking up on me. Now there are lights everywhere and Christmas trees in the houses and I love it. It is like they just suddenly appeared and I never saw anyone putting them on their house. Christmas is indeed sneaking up, and as I look at the calendar, it is coming quickly! Keeping the Hope shopping day is in a couple of weeks, Advent Spiral, and somehow we have got to have a youth party for the ever famous Dirty Christmas. My goal this year is to not get too busy with all the holiday happenings. I will put up a tree, put up decorations, get things ready for the Spiral, Keeping the Hope, etc... However I want to make sure that I slow down enough to listen to the story. And to listen for God.

The shepherds in the story always amaze me. Actually most of the people in the story amaze me. They could have all said, "No God I'm too busy. Send your child another day or to someone else." Yet, each of them said "yes". And I love that they stopped long enough to listen and even in the face of impossibility was able to hear and accept what God had to say.

I wanna be like that. I want to slow down enough so that I know where God is leading me. After all, aren't we all called to bring Jesus into the world and be examples of the light?

What about you all as teenagers? Where will God call you to bring light this holiday season? Perhaps it is to a Keeping the Hope kid. Perhaps it is to a friend at school. Perhaps it is to your own family. Perhaps it is to each other in the youth group. Perhaps it is to a stranger. I hope you will let your light shine this holiday season. And when God calls may you say "yes".

Oh and if you happen to live around the corner from me and find your snowman suddenly deflated...I know nothing.

Peace,  
JD 3. True or False: Advent, which leads up to Christmas on December 25th, constitutes the first season of the Christian church year. (True)

## Youth Calendar

- December 2** - Advent Spiral Walk; fellowship hall; 6 pm
- December 8** - Shop for Keeping the Hope and wrapping party; 1pm
- December 9** - no youth that evening
- December 15** - Keeping the Hope Christmas Mission Day; 11am
- December 16** - Youth Christmas Party!!!!!! 6 pm
- December 23** - Children's Christmas Program
- December 24** - Light Luminaries before Service 4:30pm



**Luminaries** – The Youth will be selling luminaries as their fundraiser for the month of December. For a \$2 donation you can have a candle lit in memory or honor of someone you love. Your loved ones name will be written on the bag and all of the candles will be lit before worship on Christmas Eve. We will light up the outside of the sanctuary and the area surrounding the grove with these luminaries! Donation forms will be available on December 9th and will be accepted until December 19th.  
**Questions? Contact Cyndi in the office at 704-455-2479 / churchadmin@rockyriver.org**

# Congregational Care

## GriefShare

The Fall series ended on November 8th and we had good attendance at our Surviving the Holidays seminar on the 15th. The Spring session will be held from February 21 thru May 23. The meetings are held on Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00pm. Please invite anyone you know that has experienced the loss of a loved one to join us. **Questions: Contact Julia Alexander at 704-455-9753 or 2jralex@ctc.net**

## Healing Touch Clinic

The Healing Touch Clinic has been suspended until January 2018 due to an abundance of church activities in December. We will resume on Sunday, January 13th.

*The clinic is held the second Sunday of each month and is open to the public.*  
**Questions? Please contact Julia Alexander, 704-455-9753/2jralex@ctc.net**

**Quilts of Love & Fidget Quilts** is ongoing project for some of Rocky River women who enjoy quilting! We have given away several, which have been much appreciated, and there are more in the vestibule available for people to sign out to give to someone in need. Please put a date, your name and recipient name on the clipboard when you take one, so we have a number to report to Congregational Care committee for their session report. There are quilt scraps and notions, yarn, and some batting upstairs that can be used for these quilts, and anyone interested in starting a project can contact Barbara Murray or Julia Alexander.

**NEW!!! Yo Yo Quilts** - If anyone is interested in doing some hand sewing on a Yo-Yo Quilt join us on Friday January 11 at 10 am. We have been given a beautiful partially done project that has the potential for being a great Raffle or Auction piece for our Building Fund. Midgie Brawley has donated the materials, and we can spread the little circles of fabric out and teach **anyone** how to put these babies together in a work of Art!  
**Contact Julia Alexander for more details @ 704-455-9753.**

**Bread Makers Needed** - Do you like to bake? Are you ready to get involved in a ministry at RRPC? We are preparing our bread schedule for 2019 and need a few more volunteers to help us out! We have seen an increase in visitors and it is our custom to offer them a loaf of bread after service. You would only have to bake a few times a year depending on how many volunteers we have.  
**To volunteer please contact Jerry Clark @ gclark6@bellsouth.net or 704-458-9233**

10. Herod is mentioned as being "king of Judea" when Jesus was born. Of the six Herods named in the New Testament, which Herod figures in the nativity story: Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas, Herod the Great, Herod Philip, Herod Agrippa I, Herod Agrippa II? (*Herod the Great*)

**Silver Sneakers Yoga and Classic Classes** - are now offered at RRPC. The Classic exercise class is offered on Mondays at 10:00 and 11:00am. The Yoga class is offered on Tuesday at 10:00am. Crystal Passmore is the instructor and is certified by Silver Sneakers. If you are a member of Silver Sneakers the class is offered at no charge, if you are not a member of Silver Sneakers the cost is \$3 per class. This class is designed for all ages and skill levels. Chairs are available if needed for support! Come and give it a try!



**Christmas Open House at the Manse** – Join Neal and Deb at the Manse on Sunday December 9th for a time of fellowship and Christmas cheer! Drop in anytime between 2:30 and 4:30. Refreshments will be served and all are welcome!!

*If anyone in the congregation falls ill, is injured, in the hospital or in need of pastoral care—**WE WANT TO KNOW!** Please call Pastor Neal directly on his cell phone (really—call his cell phone—he wants you to!) or call Cyndi Conway in the office so Neal can arrange to visit and offer assistance.  
**Pastor Neal: 910.280.9688/nealcarter64@gmail.com Church Office: 704.455.2479***

# Children



## Children's News

from Sharon Vanpelt, Director of Christian Education  
Teaching the Faith

Want to be a part of this fascinating and important ministry at Rocky River? Contact Sharon Vanpelt ([dce@rockyriver.org](mailto:dce@rockyriver.org)) or Thomas Heavey ([thomas@locdoc.net](mailto:thomas@locdoc.net))

### DCE's Corner The Word Among Us

Reflective reading of the scriptures to lead us into prayer has been a practice in the church from the earliest centuries. One method is called *lectio divina*, from the Latin for "divine reading." *Lectio Divina* is simple to do and it can be done anywhere or any time you can find some quiet or peace. The only real requirement is to concentrate on what you are doing through each of the steps. There are a variety of forms of *Lectio Divina*, but most involve four steps: Read, Reflect, Pray, and Act.

One form that I was taught involves opening with prayer, reading a passage 3 times with pauses in between, then writing down 2 or 3 words in the passage that stand out to you after each reading. At the end, pray again for guidance from the Holy Spirit as you move forward in your day.

In Godly Play, our Elementary Sunday School classes, there are certain stories that we retell every year—Creation, Exodus, Baptism, the Good Shepherd, and, of course, the Nativity story told throughout Advent. By the time children have been in Godly Play for 4-5 years, they know these stories very well. The challenge becomes for the child to listen even more carefully to see if there is something different they might learn with each retelling.

This is a lesson we might all take, especially at this time of year. The Nativity story is very familiar to many of us, so much so that we might gloss over the story as we hear it for the 12<sup>th</sup> time in a month. But what might happen if instead we listen even more closely to the story? While the story has not changed, our personal situations have changed, and the perspective with which we come to the scripture story may affect our hearing differently? What might we hear God telling us this time? How might the Holy Spirit move us to act toward friends and strangers? Let's use this Advent to seek new messages from God with each Bible study, Sunday School class, devotional reading, or worship service.

*"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, ... full of grace and truth.": John 1:14*

## Children's Christmas Program



The youth and children will present **The Story of Christmas Through the Arts** for the congregation and friends on Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Fellowship Hall during the Sunday School hour. They will offer their talents to present the Nativity story using drama, music, and art. Coffee and juice will be provided beginning at 9:30. You won't want to miss this special time as we draw near to the celebration of Jesus' birth.

All children are invited to be part of the Christmas Program!

Younger children may be angels, shepherds, or animals with no speaking parts.

Come to one or both of the following rehearsals:

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Sunday, December 9, time to be announced | Costume fitting             |
| Sunday, December 16, 10:00 a.m.          | Rehearsal                   |
| Wednesday, December 19, 6:45 p.m.        | Speaking Parts Rehearsal    |
| Saturday, December 22, 4:00 p.m.         | Dress Rehearsal (REQUIRED!) |

12. In A Charlie Brown Christmas, which Peanuts cartoon character recites the account of the Nativity, and from which Gospel does that character quote? (Linus, quoting Luke 2)

## Sunday School Holiday Schedule

**December 23**—No Sunday School classes; attend the Christmas Program in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 a.m.

**December 30**—Sunday School classes as usual

## Godly Play Teacher Schedule

*Both classes will be combined for the month of December.*

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Dec. 2  | Godly Play 1-Janet Little-storyteller / Dave Mowery/Joey Dulin-doorkeepers      |
| Dec. 9  | Godly Play 1-Julie Alexander-storyteller / Cindy Spickard/Mandy Ide-doorkeepers |
| Dec. 16 | Christmas Program rehearsal—No Godly Play                                       |
| Dec. 23 | Christmas Program-No Sunday School classes                                      |
| Dec. 30 | Godly Play 1-Erica Heavey-storyteller / Kathy Linker-doorkeeper                 |

2. What is the difference between "Advent" (capital "A") and "Nativity" (capital "N")? ([Advent refers to a season of the Christian church; Nativity refers specifically to the birth of Jesus.](#))

## Reverse Advent Calendar

There is a new type of Advent Calendar that has been sweeping through social media the past couple of years. Advent Calendars usually serve as a way to count down the days to Christmas, usually by opening a "window" to reveal a clue to the Nativity or a Christmas scene. Some even reveal a toy of candy or chocolate treat.

The idea behind a **reverse Advent calendar** is different. The reverse Advent calendar encourages us to think of others as we wait to celebrate Jesus' birth. Instead of winding down the numbers as we approach Christmas day, you will create a collection of 25 items to help feed the hungry. Pick out a sturdy basket, box or bag (reusable grocery bags are great for this) and fill it with food donations for your local food pantry – one item for every day in December. Then, when your bags are filled, take them to the food pantry of your choice.

Here is a sample list of needs:

- Dec. 1 Box of cereal
- Dec. 2 Peanut butter
- Dec. 3 Stuffing mix
- Dec. 4 Boxed potatoes (Au Gratin, Scalloped, Potato flakes, etc.)
- Dec. 5 Macaroni & Cheese
- Dec. 6 Canned fruit
- Dec. 7 Canned tomatoes
- Dec. 8 Canned tuna
- Dec. 9 Dessert mix
- Dec. 10 Jar of Applesauce
- Dec. 11 Canned sweet potatoes
- Dec. 12 Cranberry sauce
- Dec. 13 Canned beans
- Dec. 14 Box of Crackers
- Dec. 15 Package of Rice
- Dec. 16 Box of Oatmeal
- Dec. 17 Box of Pasta
- Dec. 18 Jar of Spaghetti sauce
- Dec. 19 Chicken noodle soup
- Dec. 20 Tomato soup
- Dec. 21 Canned corn
- Dec. 22 Canned mixed vegetables
- Dec. 23 Canned carrots
- Dec. 24 Canned green beans

Not only is this a fun thing for the whole family to do together, from creating the advent calendar structure itself to picking the goodies to go in it, it more importantly teaches your kids the importance of helping others and seeing the bigger picture at Christmas. It can be low-cost and low maintenance, and in the end you will know that you've given a Christmas present to someone that really needed it. It's a great way to serve the Christ Child this December!