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“Raise your voice... do not be afraid.” — The Messenger

Sundays in Advent

Advent 1- November 29

“I Believe in the Sun: Hope for Tomorrow”

“Prepare the way...” “Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news.”

“Raise your voice... raise it; don’t be afraid” (Mark 1: 1-15 and Isaiah 40: 1-11)

This Advent, we are looking to hear some comfort, some challenge and some good news. The prophet Isaiah and the four Gospel authors were writing in a time when people needed desperately to hear all of these as well. This first week, Isaiah and the gospel writer who published first—Mark—reassure the people that good news is beginning and yet they both say, “make yourself ready!” Raise your voices, change your hearts, get ready to be transformed, because now is the time. Have hope that we can do what needs to be done to bring more light into the world.

Advent 2 - December 6

“I Believe in Love: Daring Right Relationship”

“Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, And they will call him, Emmanuel (‘God with us’).” (Matthew 1: 23 and Isaiah 7: 14)

In both the Gospel of Matthew and Isaiah, a messenger appears as a sign from God, heralding a new era. In each passage, the words “do not be afraid” appear... offering a clue that the messenger—whether prophet or angel—was referencing something that induced fear in the recipient. A new way of being, of relating and loving takes courage—eschewing the present order of things so that a new and better day can be born.

Sundays in Advent

(continued)

Advent 3 - December 13

“I Believe in God: Ode to Joy”

“He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.” “I live on high, in holiness, and also with the crushed and the lowly, reviving the spirit of the lowly, reviving the heart of those who have been crushed.” (Luke 1: 52 and Isaiah 57: 15b)

This week we turn to Luke’s writing which is an account in two acts: The Gospel biography of Jesus and then the story of the early church—the “Jesus community.” Whether you were a Jew or Gentile in those days, deciding to become a part of this illegal early Christian movement could bring punishment for your allegiance. Surely the message in both Luke and Isaiah that the downcast, lowly, and oppressed would rise up is a welcome and inspirational account. Like the Jewish exiled people of Isaiah’s time and the early Christians, we also sometimes wonder where God is in our suffering. We long to hear the promise that a reason for joyful praise is the good news on the way!

Advent 4 - December 20

“I Believe in the Light: Illuminating Peace”

“What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people.”

“A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” (John 1: 3-4 and Isaiah 9: 6)

The “great light” prophesied by Isaiah in today’s text is echoed in the first strains of John’s Gospel good news: the light that brings peace—that saves the people from all that would extinguish it—has been there from the beginning. The Word is made flesh and dwells among us. This reign is now... will we believe it? Will we continue to put flesh on it, embodying the peace meant for all humanity?

Christmas Pageant - December 20

Following our advent tradition of presenting a Christmas pageant on the fourth Sunday of December, we will present a virtual pageant titled, ***“The Good News Goes Viral”*** this year. *The Good News Goes Viral* is a virtual nativity play specifically written to be rehearsed and performed remotely. It tells the story of Jesus’ birth in a fun and lighthearted way as communicated through video messages between biblical characters.

This play is inspired by the question: What would happen if biblical characters had to communicate the same way as we do in this time of social distancing? Through video calls.

It begins with an Angel, sharing a very important video message to Mary, and continues through the perspectives of 10 other biblical characters, including Joseph, an Innkeeper, the Magi, the Shepherds, and of course, Mary.

You will want to come early to worship on the 20th of December to grab a good seat (on Zoom) for this “don’t miss” pageant.



“Raise your voice... do not be afraid.” — The Messenger

Christmas Eve

Silent Night Filled with Light

What is your favorite part of Christmas Eve worship? Is it the candles in the windows? Is it seeing all the college students you miss throughout the year? Is it singing Silent Night? Maybe it's leaving the late service and the peaceful drive home? This year we are offering two new ways to experience the evening and who knows, one of them may be added to your favorites list.

Journey to the Manger

Labyrinths were developed when pilgrimages to Jerusalem were no longer a viable option for many people (interestingly, especially in the Middle Ages when violence and plagues made it dangerous). The journey to the center was a symbolic pilgrimage to a holy place, and the walk back out from the center symbolized the journey home. Walking a path as pilgrimage to a destination is also deeply a part of our traditions, historically and currently.

We invite you to follow the path of light to the manger this **Christmas Eve** and celebrate the birth of Christ in a beautiful new way.



From **4-6pm** you are invited to walk through the Christmas story by visiting 5 stations outside and in the courtyard, and then the manger in the sanctuary. Each family will be asked to place some hay in the manger while taking a moment to see, feel, and hear the familiar sights and sounds of the sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Worship Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve we are pleased to offer your family the chance to worship at a time that is suitable for you. This is your time to gather together around your worship space and hear the story, sing the songs, and share the love of Jesus Christ with one another. **After 4pm you will be able to click a link on our website that will take you to the RCLPC Christmas Eve worship.** Fill your night with music and light from home this year and worship with us.

For as Long as I Can Remember...

For as long as I can remember, my mother transformed the house at Christmas. Every inch of it adorned the Christmas spirit. We had curtains that changed out just for the Christmas season, a mistletoe ball that hung in the hall, Santa and nativities in every nook and cranny, records that shared the music of the Muppets, John Denver and Johnny Mathis, and a 14-foot tree as the star of the show in the center of our family room. The child in us sprang forth, the one that anticipated the coming of Santa, the coming of the Christ child, the goodwill of all men, and we were made new.

Christmas does not care how old you are; it cares only how old your spirit is. I think it's fair to say that each of our spirits have aged this year. We've grown a little older, a little more fearful, a little more skeptical of the future. We have become jaded Scrooges as we isolate from the world- at least I have.

It's time for change. It's time to "haul out the holly and put up the tree before our spirit falls again." It's time to carol in hope, love, joy and peace, to snuggle into a good movie where we know the ending and wait in eager anticipation for what it will bring. It's time to get creative in how we share love, joy, hope and peace with others. It's time to transform our houses, our beings into the spirit of Christmas! It's time to anticipate the power of God to transform each of us and our world with an infant. It's time to be a little like Scrooge and chant, "'I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.'" May these Sunday School adventures, whatever your age, inspire you.

In His love and light, Paula Viner

Pre-K to 12th Grade- Advent Adventure

The Sunday School children and the youth group teens will be participating in a 4-week Advent Adventure. Each will receive an Advent Adventure bag and a chance to bring love, joy, peace and hope to the world during the season as well as enjoy a Christmas movie or two.

DECEMBER 4TH, 8:15pm- 10:30pm - YOUTH GROUP PJs & PE Night

If you are between 6th and 12th grade, hurry up and get on board! We will gather on Zoom to watch some of the movie, plays some games, and have a great discussion homing in on our childlike Christmas spirit and receiving the Advent Adventure challenge. This is our first Friday Night movie together. We will gather each Friday on Zoom to watch a movie and have some fun. We need you to **RSVP by December 1^s** to participate in our fun Advent Adventures.

DECEMBER 6th, 4:00pm- 5:00pm- SUNDAY SCHOOL on Zoom

Children pre-K to 5th grade who are a part of our Sunday School program, have we got a night for you! We will talk about the LOVE we can bring at Christmas, sing a song and watch the Grinch! Each child will receive an Advent Adventure bag prior to the night so they are ready to share their God-given lights. Emails will be sent on how this family film festival will work.

*Quick Glimpse
into Our Weekly
Movie Fun*

Week	Movie	Advent Theme
11/30- 12/5	Polar Express	Hope & Believing
12/6-12/12	<i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i>	Love
12/13- 12/19	<i>Frosty the Snowman</i>	Joy
12/20- 12/23	<i>Charlie Brown's Christmas</i>	Peace
12/24	<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Christ Candle & Light

Adult Sunday School

During our Advent worship, we will be celebrating the season using material from Dr. Marcia McFee's "I Believe" Advent series. Accompanying this, I invite you to join me as we consider a collection of documentaries about the power of music in difficult times. It is recommended, but not required, that you watch the movie prior to class.



11/25- Defiant Requiem

"A rare form of courage, hope and survival Sparked an entire fighting of Nazi oppression."

<https://www.defiantrequiem.org>



12/2 Girls on the Wall

"The teenage girls of Warrenville Prison get a shot at redemption in a most unlikely form: a musical based on their lives."

<https://itvs.org/films/girls-on-the-wall>



12/9 Following the Ninth

"Following the Ninth is a documentary about The global impact of Beethoven's final symphony."

<https://www.followingtheninth.com>



12/16 Sweet Honey in the Rock

"Sweet Honey in the Rock is a performance ensemble rooted in African American history and culture."

<https://sweethoneyintherock.org>



12/23 The Singing Revolution

(on your own)

This documentary captures the nonviolent Singing revolution in Estonia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgimWmMqav4>

Ladies Advent by Candlelight Registration Deadline Extended!

Ladies Advent by Candlelight is a beautiful evening of friendship, music, dramatic readings, beautiful tables, and delicious food. In 2020, the only change is the location! Instead of us gathering in Fellowship Hall we will gather on Zoom. We can STILL set our space, we can STILL mingle, we can STILL have a delicious dessert, and we can STILL begin the Advent season with a beautiful evening set aside just for us. Ladies, invite your friends and sign up today. **Deadline to register is November 30th or when spots are full.** Questions? Contact Kathy Rabe, Bev Kerman, Carol Richardson or Raechel Sowa today!



Worship in the Space of Homelife

Advent Wreath



Do you have an Advent wreath so you can join in lighting the candle in worship? If not, it is not too late to visit the porch at church to gather the materials you need to create a wreath. Please, come and choose your materials and then join with the congregation lighting your candle during worship each week. If you need ideas Pinterest is loaded with images and the creativity is endless.



Nativity

Each year multiple nativities grace my living room. I guess you could say I have a collection. My children all have one for their room and I have a few extra I tuck around the house. Do you have a favorite creche? Is it something that is tucked under your tree or does it sit atop your buffet or piano? Did your children fight over who got to put baby Jesus in his place? The nativity is another way we can set our worship space. Consider placing the nativity in a new place this year so you can reflect on it a bit more.



Away in a Manger: Creche Collection and Advent Candle Visual Compilation

Let's connect with one another by sharing pictures of our Advent Candles and Nativity collections. Submit your pictures to office@rclpc.org so that we may bring joy, love, peace, and hope to one another during this season.

Helping Out Others in and Around Our Community Near and Far

How Can YOU Shop AND Give Money to the Church at the Same Time? By Using SCRIP Cards ... that's how!!

Buy cards from Scrip for anywhere you shop or for cards you are giving for gifts. Both will bring in more money for RCLPC Missions! How great is that? An easy way to SHOP AND GIVE! Simply send Joan Jensema an email with the cards you wish for her to order from Scrip. Send a check to the church made out to "RCLPC" for the amount you purchased with "Scrip" written in the memo line. RCLPC gets a % from Scrip of that amount.... it's THAT easy!! - A WIN-WIN for RCLPC Missions! Please consider making a contribution without making a contribution!!

Last order before Christmas.... Sunday November 29

Cards will be available for you to pick up from church or delivered to your door...your choice! If you have any questions, contact Joan Jensema.

Are You an Amazon Shopper?

RCLPC is listed as a charity on amazon.com. This means that Amazon will contribute 0.5% (1/2 of 1%) of each of your purchases to RCLPC if you so designate, at no charge to you! We are not asking you to shop on Amazon, but if you do, you have the opportunity to take advantage of the Amazon Smile program. Here's how: Go to smile.amazon.com rather than to Amazon.com. To select a charitable organization, type in "Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church." You will see two options...RCLPC, and Right – Center – Left Production Company, our in-house theater group. Choose the charity you want to benefit. You will then be able to browse or shop just like you usually do... the shopping experience is identical to Amazon.com with the added benefit that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate to the organization you select. There is no cost to you or to RCLPC.

Christmas Joy Offering

This is the season of gifts giving and receiving. This is the season of expectation and hope. Our gifts to one another demonstrate our love for one another for our own thankfulness for God's Perfect Gift. During these past months, even though we haven't been able to get together in person, we have always been together in spirit and in faith, and God has been with us. This is the season when we remember that God is present and at work among us, coming to us where we are in our own marginal moments, when we least expect it.

As we celebrate God's gift of Joy, we dedicate our gifts to those who have served God faithfully and to those who are preparing for a life of faithful service. The Christmas Joy offering is a significant opportunity for us to participate in the larger mission of the church. Fifty percent of the offerings go to Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools, and fifty percent provides assistance for current and retired church workers who are in need.

There are two ways you can contribute: If you give on-line, clearly mark "**Christmas Joy Special Offering**" in the **Notes section**. When writing a check, please make it out to "RCLPC" and be sure to put "Special Offering/Christmas Joy" in the memo. With our gifts, God's Joy will spread out into the world. [On-Line Link to Christmas Joy Offering](#)

