



The Vision

January 2014

We are called to celebrate God's presence; Nurture the spiritual life of each individual; Carry the light of Jesus Christ to the world; and Serve God by serving others.

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Light in the Darkness

January is the month of "epiphany"—light breaking into the darkness. We celebrate with Christmas lights and we sing about the star that guided the ancient magi. But the basic message is that God sends light into the darkness of our lives. That light brings us hope, joy, love and peace.



Many people feel a little down in the winter months. Doctors sometimes call it "seasonal affective disorder," but "winter blues" is probably just as good a name. Our physical health depends on receiving a certain amount of physical light. It also depends on hope, joy, love and peace.

Part of the problem is our expectations for Christmas. Many of us were shielded from struggles as children, so that we could experience a stress-free blissful holiday. Our parents didn't share with us the challenges that they faced to give us that experience, because they wanted us to enjoy it wholeheartedly. The problem is that our early Christmas experiences sometimes shape our later Christmas expectations—whether consciously or unconsciously. Somewhere deep in our souls, we believe that Christmas is "supposed to be" stress-free and blissful.

Of course, as we age, the grief over the death of a loved one becomes a more frequent companion. Long-standing traditions are often under pressure at Christmas, especially when it is the first Christmas after the death of _____. Divorce, unemployment, illness, etc., can also be difficult to manage at Christmas.

If you are feeling a touch of the winter blues, I have a prescription for you. Get yourself more involved at church! Attend worship more frequently, go to Sunday School, join a committee, join a choir, volunteer for a project, sign up to host coffee fellowship, etc. All the church committees are looking for new members in January, since they are under new leadership and face new challenges. If you help with some meaningful ministry, you will feel your own self-worth in a powerful way, and that will help to heal those winter blues.

Just forcing yourself to be among other humans in a new and challenging environment is good medicine for the soul. It may be true that you won't always have things exactly the way you want them, as you do when there is no one else involved, but that whole negotiating/compromising/debating process is part of the fun, and part of what keeps us truly living.

Don't hide your light under a bushel basket. Let it shine. See you at church....

Your brother in Christ,
Scott

Worship

January Worship Schedule

January 5 *John 1:1-18* “The Real Meaning of Christmas”

Why do we give gifts at Christmas? How do gifts support family cohesion? What gift did God give us humans at Christmas? In what various ways do we understand that gift? Why did the Magi bring gifts to Jesus? What gifts does Jesus want from us today? We also have communion today.

January 12 *Matthew 3:11-17* “God’s Call to Leadership”

Today we will ordain and install new church officers. When God calls people into roles of leadership, do they usually feel confident and prepared for the task? How does God call us into leadership? How does God equip us to fulfill the ministries to which we are called? What does Jesus mean by “to fulfill all righteousness?”

January 19 Pulpit Exchange. In celebration of Prayer for Christian Unity week, today we will have a pulpit exchange with several Covenant of Churches pastors. Watch the bulletin to see which pastor will draw RPC and which church will be welcoming Pastor Scott.

January 26 *1 Corinthians 1:10-18* “Church Factions”

Why do churches sometimes develop competing factions? What does God feel about our various factions? What is the cure to factionalism? Why is it “natural” to seek a faction of like-minded persons? How do we live as Christians in a world dominated by factionalism? The RPC Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on January 26 following the Worship Service.

Worship at Cantata and Scottish Home

Deacons Lloyd Bradbury and Steve Marcus welcome any and all congregation members with talents in public speaking and/or music (or just plain helping) to join us in the worship service for the residents of Cantata (the British Home) on January 5 at 1:30 p.m., and the worship service for the residents of the Scottish Home on January 19 at 2:00 p.m.

January Opportunities

If you are able to host Coffee Fellowship, please contact [Paige Rambeaux](#)

For flower contributions, please contact the [RPC Office](#)

Potential Acolytes and Liturgists, please contact [Claire Gangware](#)



	Liturgists	Acolytes	Ushers	Flowers	Coffee Fellowship
January 5	Hollie Miezio	Samantha Miezio	Susan Lynch, Patti Halline, Meyer Family	OPEN	OPEN
January 12	Youth	OPEN	Jon & Deb Jansky Ourth Family	OPEN	OPEN
January 19	Michael Aieta	OPEN	McLean Family	OPEN	OPEN
January 26	Lisa Aulerich-Marciniak	OPEN	Dennis & Mary Ann Sadilek Colleen & Bill Muller	OPEN	OPEN

Session Highlights

In December, the Session:

- ◆ called a congregational meeting for January 5 to elect additional church officers;
- ◆ removed Stan and Michelle Holman Van Nice from the rolls as they have joined another church;
- ◆ approved the 2014 budget;
- ◆ authorized the trustees to enter into an agreement with the State of Illinois to have fire doors installed in the Preschool area within the coming year, so as to be in compliance with a mandate from the State Fire Marshal;
- ◆ met with Rev. Eric Heinekamp from Presbytery and discussed ways to better integrate the preschool with the mission of RPC and to clarify the relationship between the church and the school.



Mary Ann Sadilek
Clerk of Session

January Birthdays



Joe Ourth	1/1	Ron Pike	1/12	Anna Franzo	1/24
Laura Vanags	1/4	Shannon Buhle	1/13	Audrey Withers	1/24
Terence Akebe	1/5	Amy Regan	1/14	Claire Chaney	1/25
Matt Lisle	1/7	DeAnn Gruber	1/15	Bob Gruber	1/25
Chris Bouse	1/8	Jenny Kolinski	1/15	Samantha Miezio	1/26
E. Jay Van Cura	1/8	Stella Meuyou	1/16	Shelley Reichle	1/27
Sara Willinger	1/8	Carol Franzo	1/17	Abby Willinger	1/28
Andie Sterner	1/9	Chuck Niedrich	1/17	Laura McLean	1/30
Celia Carl	1/11	Emma Schander	1/20	Rachel McLean	1/30
Lisa Hastings	1/11	Johnathan Gruber	1/21	Tom Booton	1/31
Kelly Haugland	1/12	Mary Ann Sadilek	1/23	Isabella Cain	1/31
		John Cain	1/24	Remy Doornebos	1/31

Trustees for January are George Meyer and Jon Jansky.

Sharing Our Gifts

Volunteer Highlight: Elizabeth Musick

When I transplanted myself to Riverside from Texas in the summer of 2007, I looked forward to making my church home in its Presbyterian Church. This congregation had made welcome my husband, Frank, and me for several weeks in 2001, when we were "on furlough" -- home assignment-- from Brazil. Our daughter, Alice, and her family lived in Riverside and I was sure that RPC was where I (now widowed) wanted to worship and belong after I moved here.

Being part of the Women's Bible Study was among the first activities I participated in. Then I was honored to be elected an elder, serving on the Worship and Music Committee. Soon I volunteered to help with the children in Ringers and Singers, followed by ringing as a substitute in the Bell Choir (now acaBELLa Ringers), joining as a "regular" when there was an opening.

Recently, I was asked the question: "Why do you feel it is important to help out at the church?" It is difficult for me to answer briefly; but this is a partial response. The Church is the Body of Christ, and it is the place where a Christian can begin to know God's will for her or his life and exercise it. "A primary purpose of the Church is to help us discover our gifts and . . . to hold us accountable for them . . ." (From *Eighth Day of Creation* by Elizabeth O'Conner). Every Christian has one or several of the many spiritual gifts God provides, and within a congregation there are countless needs and ways for them to be used.

A church is not just one committee or one particular family or one person. A church is all of us, working together for mutual and loving edification. *For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.* (Ephesians 2:10)

Some years ago Richard Avery and Donald Marsh wrote the song, "We Are the Church." The chorus goes like this:

*I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!
All who follow Jesus all around the world! Yes, we're the church together.*

There is a place for every single member to work in this congregation. Can you pray? Do you love to sing or play an instrument, or teach, or arrange flowers, or cook, or are willing to clean up? Do you enjoy building or repairing things, or planning financial matters, or writing? Are you talented and compassionate in visiting and helping people? Are you artistic? And let's not forget what is written (in *2 Corinthians 9: 7*) about being "a cheerful giver"! Whatever you are passionate about, God will open a door for you.

I love being a part of this church in God's universal Church.

I am the church. You are the church. We are the church together.

And that is why I believe it is important to help out.

Project Linus: Providing Security Through Blankets

Project Linus provides homemade blankets, quilts and afghans, lovingly made by volunteers, to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need. Colleen Muller invites anyone interested to join in making crocheted or knitted 6-inch squares (any color, but must be in 4-ply yarn). Please contact Colleen for more information at bileen81@yahoo.com. To learn more about Project Linus, visit www.projectlinusoakpark.homestead.com.



CARERS Corner

Our January donations will go to Interfaith House, an organization that provides a home and other resources to help ill and homeless adults restore their health, rebuild their lives, and regain self-sufficiency. We can help by **sending kitchen utensils, bathroom necessities and anything that will help them get settled** when they are able to live independently. Thank you in advance for your help.

Hygiene Kits

RPC was one of 47 congregations in the Chicago Presbytery that collected items to make [hygiene kits](#) for Church World Service. The hygiene kits are distributed to those in need through natural disaster or poverty. In all, 2,025 hygiene kits were created within the Presbytery churches. Several congregations also offered financial support to cover the costs of shipping the kits from the warehouse to their final destinations. \$1,129 was received for processing costs and donations of \$615 were received to purchase additional kits. Thanks to all who helped in this effort.

Our Giving Journey: Michael Aieta

We have asked church members to share their stories of why it is important for them to support RPC. Here is the story shared by Michael Aieta as told to the congregation on December 8.

When I look around the Sanctuary and see a mix of new and familiar faces, I think about what brought you in here today? You must value something happening here.

For some, it's the hymns you sing together, for some it's seeing your Christian friends, neighbors and classmates. For some it's a time and place to reflect on a sermon or scripture reading that confirms or challenges your beliefs, and reveals a new step on your faith journey.

Maybe it's the education you received in Sunday school, confirmation class, or on a mission trip. Or you really enjoy getting involved, and helping others in greater need. (Or maybe you're only here because your parents think it's a good idea and you're still trying to figure out why.)

This past Pageant Sunday was one of those special days at RPC, where we shared the excitement, anticipation, and celebration of a child's talents in participation in the Christmas story. These talents are being recognized, nurtured, and encouraged through the programs of staff members like Jenny Kolinski's Christian Education and Sally Sloane's children's choir.

These are values and causes I believe in. This church is a priority and a commitment that we have made as a family, as we recognize that it takes support **all year, year in and year out** to build and maintain a program of this caliber. As a result of initiatives like this, we have an amazing environment to share the love we have for our own family, our extended church family, and all the ministries of God's church.

Finance Update

Year-to-date financial status at end of November (92% of the way through the year):

Receipts	\$ 250,918	(76.2% of budget)
Disbursements	\$ 294,158	(89.3% of budget)
Deficit	\$ 43,240	



Christmas Pageant

Our Children's Worship Service on December 8 drew quite a crowd to watch a record number of RPC children participate in a most meaningful and memorable service. This old-fashioned Christmas pageant highlighted the talents of our youth. From the musicians, to the ushers, liturgists, and actors, each child worked very hard to make this service so special. I'm sure you'll agree their hard work paid off! Our bulletins featured beautiful artwork from several of our Sunday School students. Even the Statement of Faith was created by the children in Sunday school. There were also many adults who helped make this wonderful day a success. Many thanks to all of you and a special thanks to Patti Friend for her dedication to helping with the pageant for so many years.

Jenny Kolinski





RPC was filled with beautiful music in December: children ringing and singing on December 8, our talented youth musicians, and the Messiah performance on December 15.



What's Happening in Sunday School

Sunday School returns on January 8. We're starting off the New Year with a fascinating rotation on Handel's *Messiah*. Often considered a Christmas favorite, it was actually written as an Easter oratorio in 1742. It offers a panoramic sweep of Christ's life, from the expectation of the Messiah's birth through his life, suffering, death and resurrection and to his future coming glory. Specific information about this month's schedule will be available on www.rpcusa.org in early January.



January's Memory Verse

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

John 1:29

At left: Brrrrrrrr! Many thanks to our fearless confirmands for braving the cold to clean the windshields and replenish the washer fluid in the vehicles of parishioners as they left church on December 15. What a nice surprise!



Happy 2014! January will be another busy month at preschool. We will be talking all about winter and what it brings, and getting ready for our annual Wicky Wacky Wednesday at the end of the month.

We are now accepting applications for the 2014-2015 school year. Applications are available outside of the church office and are due on or before January 9. Any questions? Please give the preschool a call at 708-447-1520.

Youth Group News

Here's what's in store for January. Mark your calendars—we hope to see you!

Sunday, January 5: Game Night at Ascension Lutheran

Sunday, January 12: Games and Discussion: 7 Myths about Christianity

Monday, January 20: MLK weekend—Bowling—always a favorite!

Friday, January 24 to Sunday, January 26: Junior High Retreat--Bloomington, Illinois

As always, feel free to bring a friend to any of our activities! If you have any questions, or know anyone who would like to be added to our email list, please contact Tara Gregus at taragregus@yahoo.com.

Teen Scene will resume meeting on Sunday, January 5, in the church library at 9:00 a.m. All high school students are invited to attend.

Girls' Group meets on Thursday evenings at 7:00, resuming on January 9.

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

2013-2014 Horizons Bible Study topic is *An Abiding Hope - The Presence of God in Exodus and Deuteronomy* by Janice Catron. The next meeting is **Wednesday, January 22**, at 10:00 a.m. in the Social Hall. All women are invited.

Lesson Four: Passing Through the Waters
Background Scripture: *Exodus 13:17-15:21*
Key Scripture: *Exodus 13:17-18; 14:5-14, 21-29; 15:20-21*

Key Idea: For Jews and Christians alike, the exodus is tied to the salvation of all peoples; thus, Christians connect this event to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, especially as we celebrate it in the sacrament of baptism. Through baptism, we are called to be disciples of Christ.

Lesson leaders are Elizabeth Musick, Sylvia Schade and Joyce Van Cura. Elizabeth will lead Lesson 4.



Fabric art by Lee Porter: *Liberation into the Wilderness* illustrates the Hebrew slaves' passage to freedom through the Red Sea. The image is juxtaposed against the wilderness, where God will work with the former slaves to develop communities.

Human Scene

Join the **Human Scene** Sunday School class *every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. in the upstairs Parlor*. You will have a chance to explore scripture, theology, current events, mission projects, and your own spiritual journey.

January 5 — *Rev. Scott Jansen, RPC*

Compensating a Pastor Fairly—What is fair compensation for a Christian pastor? What should the lifestyle of a pastor be like? What would market forces suggest is fair? What should a pastor sacrifice for the sake of serving God? What should parishioners sacrifice for the sake of supporting their pastor? How do we understand the numbers we see on our annual report? Pastor Scott guides us through this open discussion.

January 12 — *Rev. Douglas Asbury, Riverside United Methodist Church*

Should Christians Rethink Homosexuality?—With the acceptance of openly gay persons in the military, the judgment of the unconstitutionality of a key provision in the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, and the passage of so-called "marriage equality" in Illinois and other states, among other things, is it time for Christians to take another look at homosexuality and the church's view of it, or shall we remain seriously divided as to whether homosexuality is a gift of God or an abomination to be condemned?

January 19 — *Rachael Miller, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago*

The Spirituality of Grief—"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." Even when we understand this great scripture, we still may ponder: How do we live out our discipleship in relation to those we love who are dying? How do we who are living make the transition needed to release our loved ones into death? Please join us for this session on the spirituality of grief. Participants will receive helpful, practical information, including psycho-education on bereavement and its processes, and the most appropriate ways to sit in fellowship with someone who is grieving.

January 26 — *Michael Aieta and Stan Schade, RPC*

The Financial Status of RPC—A review of our growing deficits during the past years and some of the methods we have used to fund our debts and maintain vital education, social and music programs. Do we need to reassess programs and funding?

Fellowship & Events

Legacy Society Coffee Fellowship—January 5

Legacy Society members will be honored at the coffee hour following Worship on January 5. RPC is grateful to those who have included the church in their estate plans: Shirley Falconer, Ellen Hamilton, Andrew Kiwiet, the Miezio Family, Cindy Reynolds, and Dennis & Mary Ann Sadilek. Information about the Legacy Society is available on the church website or from the church office. It is not necessary to indicate the amount of your gift to RPC, only the fact that you have made arrangements to leave some of your assets to the church. Please consider joining those who have already decided helped to keep RPC a vital source of Christian love, learning, and outreach.

Stewardship Committee

Membership Information Session—January 12

Seeking a church home? If you feel the RPC family may be right for you, attend a membership information session. Held immediately after worship with Pastor Scott and Elders, this hour-long program is designed to help potential new members determine if RPC is right for them. It's a conversation...not a commitment. The next session is scheduled for January 12. Please RSVP to Pastor Scott at scott.jansen@comcast.net or membership chairperson Lynda Nadkarni at lmn@floros.org.



Long-Range Planning Survey—Respond by January 31

In May 2013, the Session charged the Stewardship Committee to "determine what goals and needs RPC is not adequately addressing and how to implement necessary changes." We formed a Long Range Planning Committee to look into these issues. As a first step, we developed a survey to see how our members feel about various issues in the church. We ask that you assist us by completing the survey one of two ways. You can access the survey via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JDQP35Q>. In addition, hard copies will be available in the church office. Every confirmed member in a household is encouraged to take the survey. The link will be open until January 31, 2014, with results to be published in the Vision in the spring. Thank you in advance.

Long Range Planning Committee

Blankets+

Hope comes in many forms. In blankets wrapped around survivors of deadly storms, earthquakes and other disasters. In seeds to replant fields destroyed by floods. In a cup of safe water for a child struggling to fight off disease. And though it may look different every time, the source of hope remains the same—you.

Blankets+ is a special [mission opportunity](#) sponsored by Church World Service and supported by 8,000 congregations and groups. We do not send blankets—only contributions. Please be generous in your support of Blankets+ and send a powerful message to people in crisis: You matter to us. Colorful envelopes are in the church pews, or you may use your own envelope. Checks should be made payable to Riverside Presbyterian Church, marked Blankets+.



Please check the [Website for the most recent calendar updates!](#)



January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Office Closed	2 6:30a Women's Forum	3	4
5 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 1:30p Cantata Service 6p Jr High Youth Group 7:30p Sr High Youth Group	6 5:15p Volleyball 7p Stewardship Comm	7 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 7p Personnel Comm Mtg	8 Office Closed 4:15p Ringers 4:45p Singers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	9 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group	10	11
12 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 6p Jr High Youth Group 7:30p Sr High Youth Group	13 5:15p Volleyball 7p Finance Comm Mtg 7:30p Trustees	14 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg	15 Office Closed 4:15p Ringers 4:45p Singers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir 7:30p Session	16 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group	17 10a CARERS	18
19 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 2p Scottish Home Worship 6p Jr High Youth Group 7:30p Sr High Youth Group Vision Deadline	20 5:15p Volleyball	21 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 7p Deacons	22 Office Closed 10a Pres. Women Bible Study 4:15p Ringers 4:45p Singers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	23 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group	24 Jr High Retreat	25 Jr High Retreat
26 Jr High Retreat 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship	27 5:15p Volleyball	28 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg	29 Office Closed 4:15p Ringers 4:45p Singers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	30 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group	31	

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” — Proverbs 29:18

**RIVERSIDE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

116 Barrypoint Road
Riverside, Illinois
60546

Phone: 708-447-1520
Fax: 708-447-1525
Website: www.rpcusa.org

Place mailing label here

Riverside Presbyterian Church

Pastor: Dr. Scott Jansen
scott.jansen@comcast.net

Minister of Music: Dr. Sally Sloane
musikhs@comcast.net

Director of Christian Education: Jenny Kolinski
kolinski426@comcast.net

Administrative Assistants: Linda Hutcheson
Donna Jones
rpcoffice@sbcglobal.net

Girls' Group Leader: Michele Monroe-Clark
mmc430@hotmail.com

Asst. Girls' Group Leader: Susan Zander

Senior & Junior High Youth Advisor: Tara Gregus
taragregus@yahoo.com

Building Supervisor: Joel Hastings
joelhastings@sbcglobal.net

Preschool Director: Lisa Manganiello

Custodian: Krzysztof Gieron

Clerk of Session: Mary Ann Sadilek
MASDS@aol.com

Deacons Moderators: Thom DeVries
Frank Gangware

Trustees President: Jim Marciniak

Financial Secretary: Cindy Reynolds
financialsecretary@rpcusa.org

Asst. Financial Secretary: Roberta Gates
robmicgates73@gmail.com

Treasurer: Alfred Kitch
rpc_fred_kitch@sbcglobal.net

Asst. Treasurer: George Dluhy

Archivist: Caroline Tecson

Wedding Coordinator: Donna Ulrich

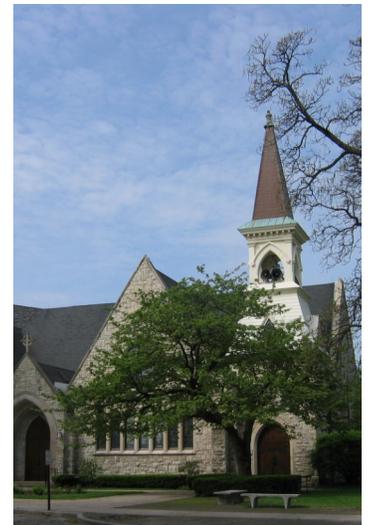
Artist in Residence: Karena Mendoza

Director of Music Emerita: Mary Ann Sadilek

Organist Emerita: Arline Robbins



Riverside Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbytery of Chicago (312) 243-8300. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)



More information about the ministry and mission of Riverside Presbyterian Church is available by contacting any member of our church staff and by visiting our website: www.rpcusa.org

Vision Editor/Webmaster:
Nancy Hopkins
RPCVisionEditor@sbcglobal.net