

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.

Inside this issue:

Worship	2
Church News	2
Sharing Our Gifts	4
Children	6
Youth	7
Adults	9
Events	10
Calendar	11

The Vision

December 2010

They Only Call On Me When They Need Something!

Have you ever heard the complaint, "They only call on me when they need something," within the church? When is that phrase appropriate?

This is an article about Christmas—more specifically about Incarnation. How does that relate to the title....



In the psalms, you find many Hebrews angry at God, complaining about being treated badly. There was a widespread feeling (famously expressed by Job) that God was unjustly disciplining God's children. Some folks felt that God was just hunting for excuses to be angry with them.

Of course, the opposite sentiment is also expressed—that God's children are just hunting for excuses to be angry with God. God often refers to the Hebrews as fickle, faithless children, who abandon the worship of their God at the slightest difficulty.

This happens sometimes within marriages. Both sides seem more intent on demonstrating the faults of the other than on finding common causes, cooperating, and building upon what is good. The same can happen between humans and God. Sometimes humans get "fed up" with God, and, instead of cooperating or looking for what is good, they hunt for faults and turn away from God.

The Hebrew story is full of people turning away from God (justifying themselves by saying that God had abandoned them first), and God turning away from the people (while declaring that they had first abandoned God).

How does the cycle of blaming and abandoning end? There are two possibilities: divorce or forgiveness. Forgiveness can only happen when one party decides that the relationship is more important than being proven "right."

The cycle of blaming and abandoning was broken with the Incarnation of Jesus the Christ. Jesus came bearing grace and forgiveness, not counting our sins against us. At Christmas we celebrate this Incarnation, and we consider how we might follow Christ's example. God has taken the initiative. God has reached out and called to us, proclaiming that our relationship is more important than being proven "right."

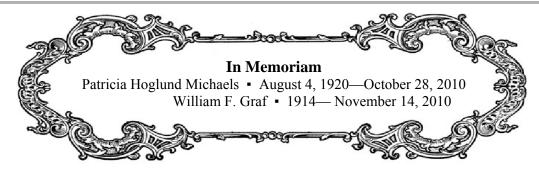
God sometimes has perfect justification to say about us, "they only call on me when they need something." However, after the Incarnation, we are *never* justified in saying that about God. After the Incarnation, it is always "our turn" to respond. It is our turn to reach out and seek relationship.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to worship our Lord. When Jesus commanded us, "do this in remembrance of me," he did not make it optional. He did not say, "if some human beings first initiate some love towards you, then consider offering some love in return." It is our responsibility to respond to the initiative that God took in the Incarnation. Nothing that any human being can do can ever alter that responsibility.

Let us not sit at home moping about being abandoned. God has sent us a Savior. As it was with the shepherds, it is now our turn to go to Bethlehem and see this great thing God has done.

Merry Christmas, Scott Jansen

Worship/Church News



December Worship Schedule

December 5 *Isaiah 11:1-13* "An Inspired Vision" How do we understand God's inspiration that led to Isaiah's vision? How can we translate Isaiah's vision to our own time and place? How does God go about actualizing God's plans? We will celebrate Communion today.

December 12 *Matthew 11:2-11* "A Disappointing Messiah" What did John, and the other Jews, expect of the Messiah? How did God's plans take some twists and turns through history? Are we ever disappointed with God? How did Jesus respond to John's disappointment?

December 19 *Matthew 1:18-25* "Christmas Pageant" Special Worship Service led by all of our kids. This will be a mostly "traditional Christmas Pageant" with lots of costumes and scenery and singing. Speak with Jenny Kolinski to help your kids find their roles within the service.

December 24 Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols at 4:00 p.m. and Candlelight Meditation at 10:00 p.m. The first service will be the traditional lessons and carols with "electric candles" and without commentary. The late service will feature some audience interaction/commentary, fewer lessons and fewer carols, and "real" candles.

December 26 Guest Preacher today, or possibly a Hymn Sing.



On Sunday, December 12, at 4:00 p.m., the sanctuary will be filled with the beautiful music of **Handel's Messiah**, composed in 1741. Handel, in describing his feelings while writing the Hallelujah Chorus, said "*I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself.*" We want to keep the inspiration going, but we need your help. This year's Messiah will serve as a memorial to those we have loved and lost. Please send your memorial announcements with a donation of \$40 to the RPC office, Attn: Messiah 2010. The memorials will be listed in the Messiah program.

This year's soloists are: Theresa Ludden-Wold, Erika Morrison, Wayne Parham and Pete Pohlhammer.

Please join us in the Social Hall after the performance for the annual Wassail Bowl reception.

Fellowship Tree

A church family fellowship tree is located in the parlor outside the sanctuary. You are encouraged to add a Christmas card from your family to the ornaments adorning the tree. Instead of mailing your greetings to church members, this card serves to share your holiday sentiments, and the printing and postage you save may be contributed to the Christmas Joy Offering.



Session News

In November, the Session:

- Received Bonnie Carlson and Doug Peacock as new members by reaffirmation of faith;
- Approved the expenditure of \$5540 for sidewalk repairs and replacement on the north side of the sanctuary;
- Approved the purchase of sturdy glass tumblers to replace use of styrofoam/paper cups at church events, and lightweight folding tables for use at outdoor events;
- ♦ Voted to hold the Good Friday ecumenical service at RPC on April 22;
- Received and discussed a preliminary budget for 2011, to be finalized in December after the pledge drive is completed;
- Approved a special fundraising letter to address the 2010 budget deficit;
- Removed the following from the membership rolls, at their request: Gladys & Eugene Kreml, Joan & Otto Masek, Terri & Michael Kallas, Susan Choutka, and Sharon & Douglas Schaff;
- Transferred the following members to the Inactive Roll: Doug & Margaret Wnek, James Hutcheson, Beverly Harbach & Brian Walker, Nancy Hejna, Vanessa Montes, Kellie Freeze, Brent Jordan and John Engel;
- ◆ Called a special congregational meeting for December 5, following worship, for the purpose of electing church officers:
- ◆ Noted with sadness the deaths of Patricia Hoglund Michaels on October 28 and William Graf on November 14. Mary Ann Sadilek

Clerk of Session

Deacons' Doings

It was another busy month for the Deacons, as they continue to serve God and our church family. Deacons were all involved in the Stewardship Sunday fund drive held on October 31. After a light lunch and some fellowship in the Social Hall, Deacons fanned out among the homes of our congregation, making personal calls on our church's members. Deacons also served the meal after the memorial service for Pat Hoglund Michaels. Deacon Amanda Gregus headed up this year's CROP Walk, which our church hosted. The Deacons are assisting in sending notes and cards to our RPC college students. Next on our agenda is hosting the church's traditional *Caring Christmas* on December 5. Being a Deacon is a fulfilling and gratifying commitment. As a Deacon, you not only feel really good about being able to reach out and help others, but you connect with other members of our church while working side by side with them in these activities.



December Opportunities



If you are able to host Coffee Fellowship, please contact Deb Jansky or Patti Perry Halline
For flower contributions, please contact the RPC Office
Potential Acolytes, Liturgists & Ushers, please contact Elizabeth Musick

	Liturgists	Acolytes	Ushers	Flowers	Coffee Fellowship
December 5	Michael Aieta	Schade Family	Claire & Louise Gangware Serina & Hannah Ranft	Mary Rob Clarke	Karen Marzec & Cindy Reynolds Rayfield
December 12	Youth	Pecis - Kolinski Family	Aieta Family	Glawe Family	No Coffee Fellowship Wassail Reception at <i>Messiah</i>
December 19	Youth	Sanchez Family	Harvin Family Lynn Labotka	Poinsettias	Sanchez Family & Russel Brown
December 24	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN—Volunteers Needed	Poinsettias	No Coffee Fellowship
December 26	OPEN	Sara Vacek	Terence Akebe OPEN—Volunteers Needed	Mitchell Family	OPEN

Sharing Our Gifts



CARERS Corner

Canned meats for First Presbyterian Church of Chicago is our request for December. So many more people are in need this season that we ask you to be particularly generous.

Also there will be the annual "CARERS GIVING TREE" in the Social Hall for Interfaith House. There will be paper ornaments on the tree with suggested gifts to be returned to the tree unwrapped. There is nothing nicer than buying a gift for someone who may not otherwise receive one. Consider yourselves thanked in advance.

Caring Christmas

Caring Christmas is around the corner. Mark your calendars for December 5 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and join us for an evening of fellowship and fun. This year, along with our traditional cookie decorating and chili supper we will be crafting beautiful Rose Windows out of paper to decorate packages for our shut-ins. Please come and share in this wonderful hands-on ministry!



Christmas Joy Offering



For more than 70 years, Presbyterians have given generously at Christmas to support the unmet needs of families who have devoted their lives to the mission of the PCUSA. Today this Offering is shared equally by the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, which provides critical assistance to Presbyterian church workers and their families, and Presbyterian-affiliated racial ethnic schools and colleges, which enable students to develop their gifts and find their calling. The Offering dates back to the 1930s, when the former Presbyterian Church in the United States began an offering to supplement inadequate retirement income and provide supplemental medical insurance for former ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their families.

Although its roots trace back many years, this special offering remains just as essential today. Equally important to the financial help provided is the spiritual benefit received. Again and again, the individuals and families helped by the Offering say that as crucial as the financial assistance is, what really sustains them is the knowledge that the church is standing with them in their time of need.

The Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help others. RPC will collect the offering throughout the month of December. Please use the pew envelope or designate Christmas Joy on the memo line of your check. Donations can be made on-line at www.rpcusa.org/donations.html.

Finance Update



Year-to-date financial status at end of October (83% of the way through the year):

Receipts \$232,185 (64.7% of budget)
Disbursements \$266,986 (74.4% of budget)

Deficit (\$ 34,801)

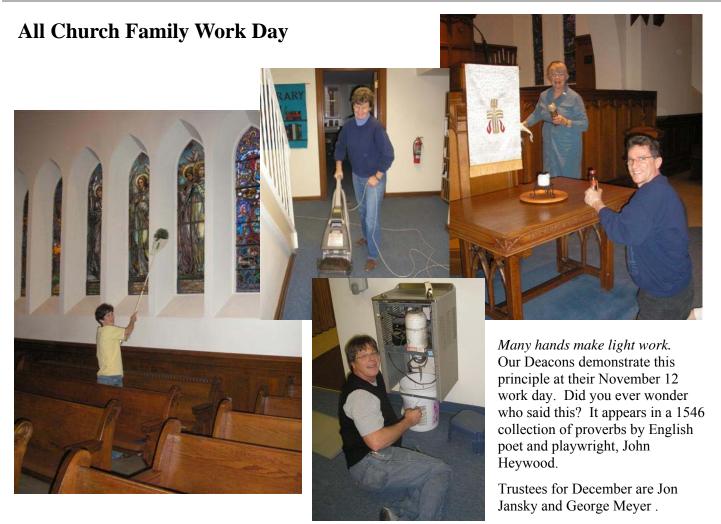
Elders have committed to eliminate the deficit, beginning with making their own contributions. Please watch your mail for an update and request to join in this effort.

God Loves a Cheerful Giver



Is there
a special person
you would like to honor
this Christmas—someone in whose name
you would like to mark a donation gift to RPC?
If so, perhaps you will welcome the opportunity
to be a
"Cheerful Giver"

RPC's Sunday School program provides a wonderful opportunity for children to learn about God's love every Sunday. In fact, with so many great activities going on, donations for certain items would be greatly appreciated—such as a printer, ink cartridges, and mouse pads for the new Computer Lab, a new set of bean bag chairs, dry-erase marker sets, and replacement books for the Children's Library, where books were damaged by water. Visit the *Cheerful Givers Bulletin Board*, which is located next to the Library in the hallway, and see how you could help the Christian Education Department this holiday season.



December 19 Worship Service

On December 19 there will be a very special worship service led by our wonderful Sunday School children. A Christmas play will be performed and you'll hear some traditional Christmas music too! It's sure to be a memorable and meaningful worship experience for all ages. *Dress rehearsal for all children participating* is on Saturday, December 18, in varying shifts between 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and on December 19 during the Sunday School hour. If you haven't done so already, please contact Jenny Kolinski ASAP at kolinski426@comcast.net to let her know how your child would like to participate.



December Memory Verse

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Christmas Around the World in Sunday School

Starting the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and continuing through December 12, children will be exploring Christmas traditions around the world.

	K &1 st grade	2 nd & 3 rd grades	4 th & 5 th grades	6 th , 7 th & 8 th grades
11/28	Gym	Creation Station	Oasis Place	Celestial Cinema
12/5	Oasis Place	Gym	Celestial Cinema	Creation Station
12/12	Creation Station	Celestial Cinema	Gym	Oasis Place
12/19	Kids Christmas Worshi	p Service: practice in the	e Sanctuary 9am (all age	es), Worship at 10am

There will be no Godly Play on December 19, and no Godly Play or Sunday School on December 26. All classes will resume on January 2.

Sunday School Teachers: A Gift to our Children

Thanks to all of our wonderful Sunday School teachers who shared their time and talents since the beginning of this Sunday School year: Shannon Buhle, Allie Burke, Jeanine Buttimer, Susan Deems-Dluhy, Nancy Dvorak, Patti Friend, Jill Glawe, Tara Gregus, Susan Lisle, Susan Lynch, Annie Mitchell, Vince Pecis, Kathi Roccanova, Noemi Sanchez and Carrie Staubus. We're still looking for a few Sunday School teachers for January. If you're interested in working with the wonderful kids of RPC please contact Jenny Kolinski at kolinski426@comcast.net.







Page 6



'Tis the Season! The preschoolers will be very busy this month getting ready for the holidays. Each child will be making gifts for their families and learning new songs for our annual Christmas Program. Not only the preschoolers have been busy . . . we would like to thank Jim Sit for his technical assistance in updating the Preschool's computer. Thanks to his time and ability we are now capable of sending out e-mail reminders to our families about upcoming events. Thanks, Jim! To the Cain family for their generous donation of a puppet theater—it's wonderful! Thank you for thinking of us. Hope your holidays are joyful!

Girls' Group

Tuesday, **December 7**: ALL AGES will meet at the church at 6:15 p.m. to head to Meadowbrook Manor in La Grange to help residents with a craft and a sing-along. Moms are encouraged to help drive and attend as well. Permission slips will need to be signed. We will return to the church around 8:00 p.m.

Monday, **December 13**: (Please note day and time change.) 5:45 p.m.-7:00 p.m. -- ALL AGES will meet for our Christmas Gathering/Secret Santa exchange at the church. We will have pizza and games and reveal the identity of our "Secret Santa."

Plans are currently being made for January 2011! Stay tuned. For more information, contact Mary Koon at maryinwi@hotmail.com



The Girls' Group participated in the November 21 worship service.

Scouts



During November, Cub Scouts from Pack 24 and Boy Scouts from Troop 24 participated in a joint outing to Waterfall Glen within the DuPage County Forest Preserve. 5th grade Webelos scouts completed a requirement needed for their *Arrow of Light* award. The Boy Scouts attending worked on orienteering requirements for 2nd Class and 1st Class rank advancements. Also in November, Boy Scouts worked on Brian Robertson's Eagle Project in downtown Riverside, and camped at Starved Rock State Park over the Thanksgiving weekend, while the Cub Scouts held their annual Bobcat Ceremony. The Scouts want to thank everyone who purchased popcorn, one of the fundraisers supporting our scouts.



The Advent Wreath that you will see lit each Sunday during December was given in memory of Harriet Ames Carlson, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Ames, who became members of RPC in 1888. You'll recognize that name from our local Ames School. Mrs. Ames is responsible for starting the



RPC Youth Group in 1913. Harriet Kweton, a current member of our church, is the Ames' granddaughter. *From the Memorial Committee Presentation 10-31-2010*

December Meeting Schedule

Here's what's happening in December with Youth Group:

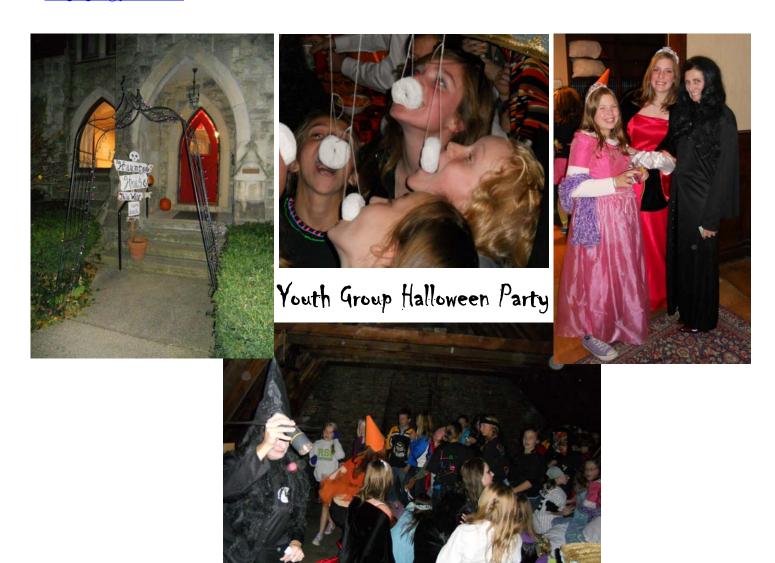
Sunday, December 5: Join us as we host the monthly service at the **British Home** at 1:30. Later, we will meet in the Social Hall to participate in **Caring Christmas**, an annual tradition with our church family.

Sunday, December 12: Come and enjoy the beautiful music of the Messiah at 4:00 in the RPC sanctuary, followed by the Wassail Bowl reception. Some of our Youth Group members and parents sing in this annual event. At 6:00, we will have **Movie Night in the Celestial Cinema**. Join us to watch "A Christmas Story" and have munchies.

Friday, December 17: Save the date for the annual **Senior High Christmas Dinner**. Put on your best Christmas finery and join us for this annual tradition. Details to be announced.

Sunday, December 19: Junior High Trip Downtown. Join us for an afternoon of sightseeing, ice skating and fun! We will take the train downtown and back and catch all the sights. More details to follow.

As always, friends are welcome at any of these events. Youth group will be in recess after December 19 until January! Merry Christmas to everyone and hope to see you in the new year! Questions? Contact Tara at taragregus@yahoo.com.





2010-2011 Bible Study

The <u>topic</u> for the 2010-2011 Horizons Bible Study is "Journeys Through Revelation, Apocalyptic Hope for Today" by Barbara R. Rossing. Many people's impressions are that the book of Revelation is violent and fearsome: four horsemen unleash destruction and calamity upon the earth; mysterious numbers like "666" spell destruction; mutant locusts and multi-headed beasts terrify; a scarlet whore of Babylon seduces nations with her cup of fornications; an end-times battle of Armageddon leaves millions slaughtered.

Plan to join the ladies on Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the RPC Social Hall. *No study is planned in December*.

Elizabeth Musick, Sylvia Schade, and Joyce Van Cura rotate the leader position. Elizabeth will lead the study for Lesson Four, "Diagnosing the Crises of Empire." Scripture: Revelation 6. Key Idea: The frightening images that come for the opening of the first six seals reveal to John's audience and to us the dangers of an unjust empire.

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. Revelation 6:12-13

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Musick at <u>lizm 59@sbcglobal.net</u>.

Pecans...Pecans...Pecans... Seventy-two one-pound bags of freshly harvested pecan halves were delivered on Thursday, organized on Friday, distributed on Sunday, and gone in one coffee hour. Thanks to the 33 participants, with 30 pre-orders, 15 of which were prepaid, it was a smooth operation. For each pound sold, \$2.05 goes to the Erie House for their Team Tutoring program for college-bound high school students. This project was handled by our Riverside Presbyterian Women.

Human Scene

December 5: The Virgin Birth

Pastor Scott leads us through the landmines of Mary's purported virginity. Christians have struggled for centuries with understanding Mary's pregnancy. We can ask "how" or "why" she became pregnant. But perhaps the most fruitful question is, *How is the world different because of Mary's pregnancy?*

December 12: Managing Your Stress

It's a busy season, and all the fun can get stressful. Add to that the general stress of modern life, and it can sometimes get to be too much. During this class, Melinda Yachnin, LCPC, will talk about the latest research about the effects of stress and the best ways for managing it.

December 19: Christmas Oratorio

Mary Ann Sadilek will lead a class on a favorite piece of Christmas music, Bach's "Christmas Oratorio." We will listen to excerpts from the piece, and Mary Ann will explain its deeper meanings. Everyone will have the chance to join in singing some of the familiar chorales Bach used.

December 26: No Class

January 2: Class resumes with a Bible study led by Pastor Scott.

Events

RPC Weekend Connections continues as a new endeavor to gather people of all ages together for enjoyable and meaningful events. It is open to church members and also anyone in the community. Our aims are community building, cross-generational interaction, fun, fellowship, and education. There will usually be child care available (\$5/child/event) with advance notice to Jennie Kolinski at kolinski426@comcast.net. Anyone interested in an event and needing transportation, please notify the RPC office, so a ride can be arranged.

Events to date have included viewing and discussing an award winning documentary, *The Power of Forgiveness* (in October), and participating in the Riverside United Methodist Church **1000 Tree Planting Project** and RPC **Games Night** in November.

Mark your calendars for upcoming events:

Holiday Stroll — Come cheer on our very own RPC Bell Choir during the Riverside Holiday Stroll on Friday, **December 3**. The Bell Choir will be playing Christmas carols from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. in one of the venues listed on the Riverside Holiday Stroll maps.

Deacons' Caring Christmas — Mark your calendars for *December 5* from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and join us for an evening of fellowship and fun. This year, along with our traditional cookie decorating and chili supper we will be crafting beautiful Rose Windows out of paper to decorate packages for our shut-ins. Please come and share in this wonderful hands-on ministry!

Messiah Wassail Bowl Reception following the annual Messiah performance with beverages and desserts. (Sunday, *December 12* • Performance at 4:00 p.m. with Reception to follow.

Book Discussion – Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You've Been Taught About God's Wrath and Judgment by Sharon Baker, Westminster John Knox Press. Join us on Sunday, January 16, 6:00-8:00 p.m. for snacks and a discussion.

Winter Valentine Dinner and Square Dance – Potluck supper and dancing with 3 musicians and caller. Square and contra dancing. For all ages. No experience needed! (Saturday, *February 12*, 2011: Dinner 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Social Hall with the dance 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the gym.

Open Mic Night — Fourth annual hidden Talent Show, light snacks. Saturday, *March* 12, 2011



For many years, members of RPC have supported BEDS PLUS, an organization providing services to the homeless of west suburban Cook County. Since 1988, BEDS PLUS has given the homeless a safe place to sleep, hot homemade meals, professional counseling, and the job services they need to become self-sufficient. Perhaps you have wondered how you might help? The BEDS website at www.bedsonline.org/ lists many ways you might be able to volunteer, but here is one very easy way: Postage is one of their biggest administrative costs. Nightly shift logs, schedules, shelter forms, newsletters, invitations, grant applications, reporting documents and other tools keep BEDS' mission thriving - but they all require postage, and lots of it!

If you have extra stamps around the house, or if you could pick up a book of stamps and donate it to BEDS, you'd help them cover an essential (and expensive) part of their program costs. Every stamp helps!

Please consider sending BEDS one \$8.80 book of stamps. Their address is: BEDS PLUS, P.O. Box 3025, LaGrange, Illinois 60525.

Please check the Website for the most recent calendar updates!

December 2010

updates!	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
	· •					
			1 Office Closed 11:30 Pro Se 12p Covenant Prayers for Peace 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	2 6:30a Women's Forum	3	4 10a Messiah Rehearsal
9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 1:30p Deacons' British Home Service 5p Caring Christmas	6 5:15p Volleyball	7 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 6:15p Girls' Group 7p Personnel Comm Mtg	8 Office Closed 11:30 Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	9 6:30a Women's Forum	10 Night Ministry	11 10a Messiah Rehearsal
9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 11:15a CARERS Comm Mtg 11:15a Endowment Comm Mtg 4p Messiah 5p Wassail Reception 6p Youth Group Movie	13 5:15p Volleyball 5:45p Girls' Group 7p Finance Comm 7:30p Trustees Mtg 7:30p Stewardship Comm Mtg	14 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 10:30a Presbytery Mtg	15 Office Closed 11:30 Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir 7:30p Session Mtg	16 6:30a Women's Forum	17 6p Craft Night 7p Sr High Christmas Party	18 10a Christmas Program Rehearsal
19 9a Sunday School 10a Worship— Christmas Pagaent 11a Coffee Fellowship 1p Jr. High Youth Group trip downtown Vision Deadline	20 5:15p Volleyball	21 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 7p Deacons Mtg	Office Closed 11:30 Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	6:30a Women's Forum	24 4p Christmas Eve Worship 10p Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas
26 NO Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship	27 5:15p Volleyball	28 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg	29 Office Closed 11:30 Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	30 6:30a Women's Forum	31	

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

RIVERSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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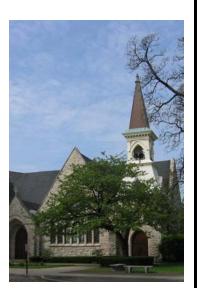
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More information about the ministry and mission of Riverside Presbyterian Church is available by contacting any member of our church staff and by visiting our website: www.rpcusa.org

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