



The Vision

January 2011

Attraction or Invasion?

At the December Presbytery meeting, our preacher described two different understandings of how the Church is related to the World.

One model is *attraction*—the Church as the center of society that attracts the periphery towards itself. For many years, the Church was the only exciting social activity around. It is fun to read clerks’ minutes from a century ago describing how parishioners begged to be reinstated after having missed three worship services without adequate excuses.

In the “good old days,” the politicians took their moral imperatives from the Church. Anything important would be hashed out after (and sometimes during) worship. You wouldn’t dare miss worship or you’d risk being left out of the loop or being branded a “sinner.” Gaining new members was just a matter of whether or not the town was growing. Social scientists have shown that nearly all church growth over the past few centuries was driven by the varying birth rates of believers.

But, at some time, the Church lost its grip on the center. In fact, all the various “centers” have lost influence—whether you look at the Lions’ Club, the Library board, or the AAUW, the trend is away from community. We used to throw ourselves into groups that met face-to-face. Now, we tend to be a collection of individuals, networked together by the internet. We may say that we “like” various affiliations on our Facebook pages, but there is no cost involved in claiming to “like” something. You just click a button.

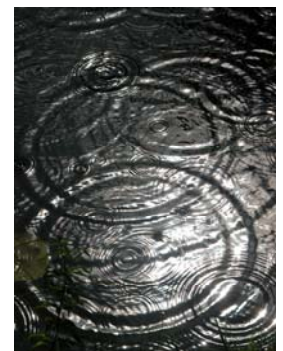
What model of the Church works in a world where community is not the norm? How does the church stay relevant to all the “spiritual but not religious” types? Will we be able to turn time backwards, if we just work harder at being even more “attractive?” If we spruce up the sanctuary, upgrade the music, build a new education wing, and hire a pastor with a full head of hair, will we attain a level of attractiveness that will bring lots of folks in?

Many churches have tried exactly that—and failed. The answer is not to feverishly pressure ourselves into becoming even more attractive. The answer is to let go of the notion of attraction. We need to release ourselves from some of what we have been doing in order to generate the resources to implement a whole new model.

In early Christianity, the model was not attraction, but invasion. Churches often met in caves, or hidden places where no one would naturally go. During worship, they received inspiration and guidance. But that was not the end of their week’s Christian obligation. Their duty was to go out into the World and spread the good news of God’s love. They often considered the World to be “enemy territory” that they had to “invade.”

Today’s model must be closer to an “invasion” than an “attraction.” How can we take what we learn on Sundays and use it to cause a visible disturbance in our workplaces, in our extended families, or among our friends? How can we behave differently enough from the World, that folks will start asking us why we’re doing that? For, therein lies our hope.

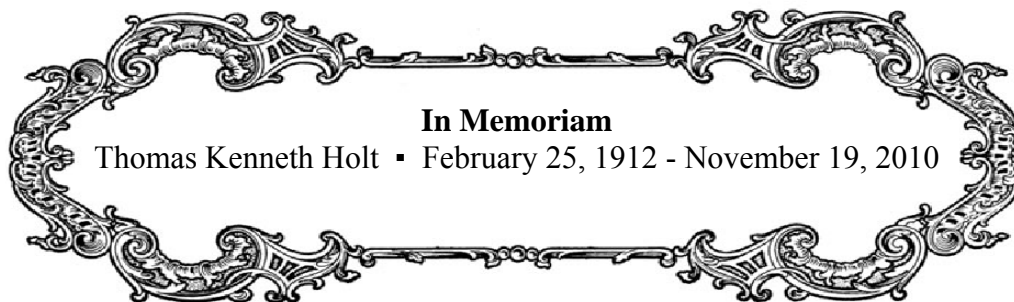
Your brother in Christ,
Scott



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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January Worship Schedule

January 2 *Matthew 2:1-12* “Finding Christ in the World” How did the Magi find out about Jesus? How does God’s Spirit work among those who are not Christians? How does God bring different people together to cooperate with one another? We also have communion today.

January 9 *Acts 10:34-48* “Why Do We Baptize?” Why was the entry ritual of circumcision replaced with baptism? What does baptism symbolize that circumcision did not? Who is qualified to be baptized? We may be celebrating some actual baptisms today.

January 16 *Isaiah 49:1-7* and *1 Corinthians 1:1-9* “Called to be Saints” What are the spiritual gifts that all church leaders should have? What does it mean to be ordained to a church office? We are doing ordinations/installations of officers today.

January 23 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 30 *Micah 6:1-8* “What Does the Lord Require?” How do we become reconciled with God? We will review some thoughts from the all-church book discussion on *Razing Hell*. Then we will have the Annual Meeting after worship.

Messiah

Even wind, snow, and weather warnings this year could not dampen enthusiasm or turnout for the annual production of **Handel’s Messiah**, led by Sally Sloane for her 7th year, on Sunday, December 12. This RPC tradition was started by MaryAnne Sadilek twenty-five years ago. This year’s soloists were Theresa Ludden-Wold, Erika Morrison, Wayne Parham and Pete Pohlhammer. They were accompanied by singers from RPC and the community, and by professional and non-professional musicians (including our own Molly Chaney, RBHS junior, on bass). **Handel’s Messiah** was composed in just 24 days in 1741; Handel described his feelings while writing the Hallelujah Chorus, “*I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself.*”

The annual **Wassail Bowl reception** took place after the performance, with warm Wassail punch, coffee, and home baked treats, served in our Social Hall all “dressed up” with candlelight, fancy tablecloths, silver, crystal. (It felt like the Drake Hotel!)

Many people say that the Christmas season is not complete without attending the RPC **Messiah**. Many thanks go to Sally Sloane, the performers, ushers, bakers, servers, set-up and clean-up volunteers, **and** to Joel Hastings, who repeatedly cleared and salted sidewalks to help everyone gain safe access to RPC!



Session News

In December, the Session:

- ◆ called the annual congregational meeting for January 30, 2011;
- ◆ approved the 2011 budget;
- ◆ approved a request from Presbytery to hold the True North boundary training at RPC on May 7, 2011;
- ◆ noted with sadness the death of Ken Holt, a member of RPC for 82 years;
- ◆ approved vacation leave for Rev. Jansen from Dec. 26-31;
- ◆ learned that no offers have been received to purchase the Saugatuck camp property;
- ◆ announced that the per capita apportionment for 2011 will be \$30.31, increased from \$28.29, to be paid by RPC to Presbytery, and urged all RPC members to make an extra donation to RPC to cover that expense, which supports the work of our denomination.

Mary Ann Sadilek
Clerk of Session

Deacons' Doings

Deacons ended the year on a high note, with another successful **Caring Christmas**. Thanks to all our bakers, decorators and crafters for participating in this annual event! While snacking on delicious homemade chili/mac and tamales, Deacons headed up an evening of crafting beautiful (and yet easy to make) tissue paper Rose Windows and decorating Christmas cookies. The Deacons themselves then personally delivered 30 goody bags to folks in our church family, to end the year the same way we started: in service to our congregation and to God. We all look forward to a wonderful 2011 with the same spirit of service and dedication, and we would like to remind everyone that we are here to minister to “those in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress,” so please never hesitate to contact any one of us, should you find yourself in need.



January Trustees: Fred Mitchell and Hank Vogel.



January 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 |
|------------|----------------|---------------|--------|---------------|-------------------|
| January 2 | Ellen Hamilton | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN |
| January 9 | Youth | OPEN | OPEN | McLean Family | OPEN |
| January 16 | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN |
| January 23 | Ellen Hamilton | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN |
| January 30 | Tony Miezio | Miezio family | OPEN | OPEN | OPEN |

Sharing Our Gifts

Treasures, Time and Talents – the Three-legged Stewardship Stool

“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

There is nothing inherently evil about owning the things we need. However, when we strive to collect wealth or possessions beyond our need, we may neglect our duty to God, to our families, and to mankind. 135 pledging units (a couple counts as one unit; confirmed children within a home are a separate unit) have committed to \$279,378 for the 2011 budget. Thank you all pledgers, most especially those who are new pledgers and those who were able to “step up” their pledges. Those of us who are blessed with wealth beyond our need have a responsibility to share generously with the less fortunate. We should view our wealth as a gift from God, entrusted to us, to carry out his work on earth.

Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” His master said to him . . . “Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” (Matthew 25: 20-21)

Can you sing, dance or tell a tale? Greet people warmly? Bake treats and make lemonade? There’s a way to match your talents to the needs of the church. Consider participation in open mic night, ushering, or coffee fellowship hosting this year. We all have talents, and recognizing and offering those talents, rather than hiding them, is a sign of our trust in God. What talents have you been given? Without sharing our talents, we limit the ways in which Christ’s work is done.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

You’re probably familiar with the story of “Stone Soup.” In the story a man creates a delicious soup for all his neighbors by starting with a stone in a pot. Each person who comes along volunteers to add another ingredient until a wonderful blend of vegetables, spices and meats is simmering for all to share and enjoy. The lesson, of course, is that when each of us contributes our humble gift we can make something wonderful. Through contribution of time you can be sure RPC is someplace wonderful.

Stewardship Prayer

O God, I resolve to put You first in my life.

I recognize that You have blessed me with all that I have and all that I am.

As your steward, I resolve to sacrifice when necessary but always to do so out of a spirit of sincere love, just as your Son, Jesus, did for me.

I humbly accept the challenge to share from my means rather than from my excess.

I recognize that being a good steward is nothing more than being truly Christian.

Dear God, I resolve to be generous with my time, talent and treasure, giving in proportion to the gifts I have been given.

I commit myself to taking care of my body and all of creation.

I know there will be times when I will fail to be a good steward, but I pledge to keep on trying.

I will confidently live each day with a spirit of true peace and joy in knowing that I am doing your will.

Amen.

Finance Update

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

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Receipts | \$262,007 (73.0% of budget) |
| Disbursements | \$288,213 (80.3% of budget) |
| Deficit | (\$ 26,206) |





*Put your caring into action...
blanket the world with love!*



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
BLANKETS+**

Meeting emergency needs and building food security
in partnership around the world

For more than 60 years, congregations across the U.S. have been responding to Jesus' call to be neighbors to those in need, in partnership with Church World Service. At home and around the world, our congregation is helping impoverished communities with the basic tools they need to sustain themselves and their families. Contributions to **Blankets +** mean that Church World Service is there for the long haul as families recover from a disaster. At its heart, **Blankets +** means *you*.

Blankets + so people in need can help themselves.

\$ 25 can provide five warm blankets

\$100 can enable three women to receive a microcredit loan

\$200 can provide a struggling farm family with a draft animal

\$250 can provide a sewing machine to a young mother who needs to support her family

\$1,000 can equip a village well with a pump and provide hygiene training for the community.

Colorful envelopes will be in the church pews, or you may use your own envelope and return a donation to RPC. Please make checks payable to Riverside Presbyterian Church, marked **Blankets +**. Dedication Sunday is February 27, but contributions can be made at any time.

CARERS' Corner

Our friend and neighbor, Meredith Kelly, has been handling the *Stars and Stripes* collections for our service men and women since March 2003. She began this service to honor her father, Gordon Hay, a long-time resident of Riverside who was a bombardier in World War II. She has been covering the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Meredith was honored on the program "Someone You Should Know" for the work she has done. Sadly, she will no longer be able to continue this ministry, as she has been diagnosed with ALS and her husband has cancer. They have all they can do to care for themselves and are not able to handle this program anymore. The CARERS believe this is a very important service and would like to continue our support; however, we will need some help. If anyone has a little time to assist us in taking donations to Lyons when the barrel is full, let one of the members of the CARERS group know and we could put together a plan. We feel it would honor Meredith for her endeavors by continuing in her fine work.

Collection for January: We are asking for one-dish meals and hot beverages for the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Suggestions are beef stew, pasta meals, hash, etc., along with warm drinks good for winter meals. People who are having a rough time appreciate these hearty warm meals during the cold winter. Your donation is very much appreciated.

Children



Passport to the Promised Land

Our “Quest for Identity” continues with the study of Zacchaeus. Kids will learn how Zacchaeus changes his identity from a corrupt tax collector to a man of faith who has a relationship with Jesus. Our wonderful Sunday school teachers for the month of January are: *Patti Friend* in the gym, *Susan Lisle* in Creation Station, *Annie Mitchell and Allie Burke* in the manse kitchen and *Lisa Marciniak* in the Oasis Place.

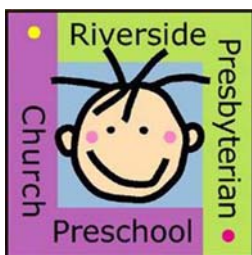
January’s Memory Verse

Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and save the lost. — Luke 19:10

| | K/1st | 2nd/3 rd | 4th/5th | Jr. High |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|------------------|
| January 2 | <i>Celebration Sunday . . .</i> | <i>All ages will meet in the</i> | <i>Social Hall for a fun group activity!</i> | |
| January 9 | Gym | Creation Station | Manse Kitchen | Oasis Place |
| January 16 | Creation Station | Gym | Oasis Place | Manse Kitchen |
| January 23 | Oasis Place | Manse Kitchen | Gym | Creation Station |
| January 30 | Manse Kitchen | Oasis Place | Creation Station | Gym |

Christmas Pageant

Our Children's Worship Service on December 19 drew quite a crowd to watch **57 RPC children** participate in a most meaningful and memorable service. This old-fashioned Christmas pageant highlighted the talents of our youth—ages 1 month old (baby Drake Sahlas) to 17 years old. From the musicians, to the ushers and liturgists, the actors, and those behind the scenes, each child worked very hard to make this service so special. I’m sure you’ll agree their hard work paid off! Our bulletins even featured beautiful artwork from four of our Sunday School students, and the Statement of Faith was created by the kids of the 4th and 5th grade class. Thanks to all of the children who participated and to all of the adult volunteers who helped make it so very special.



We are now accepting registration for the 2010-2011 school year. Applications for RPC members are due on or before January 10. Open enrollment starts after January 10. Application forms are in the rack outside the church office. We also have an afternoon spot available for the rest of this school year. Any questions? Contact Lisa Manganiello at 447-1520, ext. 2.

We are looking forward to a fun-filled January when we celebrate our 50th day of Preschool and another Wicky Wacky Wednesday. We can't imagine what *wacky* things will happen. Conferences will also take place this month with staff and parents. Happy 2011!

Christmas Pageant



Youth

Girls' Group

We will resume meeting after Christmas break on Tuesday, January 11, in the Oasis Room: 6th and 7th graders— 6:30-7:30 and 8th and 9th graders—7:30-8:30. Get ready for a winter of learning, sharing and growing together! Stay tuned to the church bulletin and email updates with details of our time together. Please contact Mary with questions at maryinwi@hotmail.com.

In December, the Girls' Group serenaded the residents of Meadowbrook Manor in LaGrange.



Youth Group News

We had fun in December visiting the British Home and hosting the worship service on December 5, participating in Caring Christmas, and watching "A Christmas Story." The Senior High held its Annual Christmas Dinner at the Gregus house on December 17 and the Junior High spent a day downtown ice skating and taking in the sights. Here's what's happening in January:

January 2: Happy New Year! No Youth Group

January 9: Regular Meeting at RPC in the Celestial Cinema—Topic TBA. Bring a friend!

January 17: Martin Luther King Holiday Weekend—We will meet on **Monday**, January 17 for Bowling. Details TBA.

January 23: Regular Meeting at Ascension—Topic TBA. Games too!

January 30: Junior High Retreat in Bloomington IL, Senior High Ski Weekend at Alpine Valley. Details will be sent in a separate e-mail.



The Jr. High Youth Group traveled to downtown Chicago in December, while the Sr. High Youth Group enjoyed a dinner at the Gregus home.



2010-2011 Bible Study

The [topic](#) 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. 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 lizm_59@sbcglobal.net.

Human Scene

January 2: *Bible study* with Pastor Scott on the Zacchaeus Story (as pertains to Sunday School)

January 9: *Haiti one year later*

Elizabeth Lupfer will return to Human Scene to tell us more about the mission work she did in Haiti last summer, and to give us an update on what is happening there now.

January 16: To be announced

January 23, 30, and February 6: *Creation vs. Science*

Human Scene will spend three weeks exploring the idea of God's Creation and some of the implications of scientific revelations for our understanding of God's presence in the world today. We will draw upon diverse sources of knowledge, including personal experiences, science, the Bible, and a diverse set of ancient and recent theological sources. We are privileged to have John Haugland lead these classes.

Presbyterian/Muslim Dialogue

The Rev. Jay Moses of the First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton is the Presbytery of Chicago coordinator for promoting dialogue between Presbyterians in our area and members of local mosques. Through him, members from RPC participated in events hosted by the Islamic community of Chicago this year:

At the Aqsa Mosque in Bridgeview, Beverly Aieta, Betsy Gardner, Roberta Gates, Sylvia and Stanley Schade, and Rev. Scott Jansen heard a talk given by the former US Congressman, Mark Siljander, about his book, *Let's Build Bridges, Not Walls* in which he describes his personal reversal in attitude towards Muslims after interacting with various Muslim leaders, both on a national and international level.

Sylvia Schade, Marilyn Slanec, and Evaine Stahrr attended the 8th Annual Ramadan Dinner hosted by MECCA (Muslim Educational Cultural Center of America). They heard two religious perspectives on Environmental Stewardship, one from Rev. Dr. Claire Butterfield, Executive Director of Faith in Place, and the other from a local imam.

There was also a pre-Presbytery Assembly presentation where Presbyterian commissioners learned about an organization called *Muslims for a Safe America*. In another forum, they heard about a small interfaith project that the Village Presbyterian Church of Northbrook has begun with the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago.

WEEKEND CONNECTIONS

All Church Family Work Day

Join the Trustees on January 16, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. for the monthly All Church Family Work Day.

Book discussion

On Sunday, **January 16**, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Scott will lead discussion of a book he recommends for all: *Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You've Been Taught About God's Wrath and Judgment* by Sharon Baker. The book is available in the RPC library, online or at bookstores. Join in for spirited discussion, snacks and beverages.



Winter Valentine Dinner and Square Dance



Supper and dancing with three musicians and caller is scheduled for Saturday, **February 12, 6:00-9:00 p.m.** Square and contra dancing for *all* ages—no experience needed! (Dinner 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Social Hall with the dance 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the gym.) We will need to wear gym shoes only on the gym floor for the dance.

Open Mic Night

Save the Date - Sunday, **March 6** - for this year's *Open Microphone Coffeehouse and Youth Cafe*. Put this fun and unique fellowship opportunity on your calendars so you won't miss it. And now's the time to start working up your poem, short story, song, magic trick, dance, or other form of entertainment. The clock is ticking! We will conduct a sign-up starting in January. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact John Haugland at barryleopold@sbcglobal.net.



RPC Weekend Connections seeks to gather together all ages of RPC and community members for enjoyable and meaningful events. 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 Jenny Kolinski at kolinski426@comcast.net. Anyone interested in an event and needing transportation, please notify the RPC office, so a ride can be arranged. Anyone interested in helping with RPC Connections or other fellowship events, contact Patti Perry Halline at pmperryil@yahoo.com or Deb Jansky at newhorizons002@att.net.

Save Your Blood!

Blood Donors: **SAVE YOUR BLOOD** in JANUARY for the Riverside/North Riverside Covenant Blood Drive in FEBRUARY - Saturday, February 12, 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Drink lots of fluids (those without alcohol and caffeine), get lots of rest, and recover by 5:45 p.m. to be ready to party at the RPC Fellowship Committee's family Valentine Dinner and Square Dance .

Ephesians 4:12 . . . why is it that he gives us these special abilities to do certain things best? It is that God's people will be better equipped to do better work for him building up the church.

Please check the Website for the most recent calendar updates!



January 2010

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|--|---|---------------------------|----------------------|-----|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship | 3 5:15 Volleyball | 4 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 7p Personnel Comm. | 5 Office Closed 11:30a Pro Se 12p Covenant Prayers for Peace 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir | 6 6:30a Women's Forum | 7 | 8 |
| 9 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 11:15a CARERS Comm | 10 5:15 Volleyball 7p Finance Comm 7:30p Trustees Mtg 7:30p Stewardship Comm | 11 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 6:30p Girls' Group | 12 Office Closed 11:30a Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir | 13 6:30a Women's Forum | 14 Night Ministry | 15 |
| 16 9a Sunday School 10a Worship & Ordinations/Installation of Officers 11a Coffee Fellowship 6p Book Discussion Vision Deadline | 17 5:15 Volleyball | 18 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 6:30p Girls' Group 7p Deacons Mtg | 19 Office Closed 11:30a Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir 7:30p Session | 20 6:30a Women's Forum | 21 6p Craft Night | 22 |
| 23 9a Sunday School 10a Worship/Pulpit Exchange 11a Coffee Fellowship | 24 5:15 Volleyball | 25 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 6:30p Girls' Group | 26 Office Closed 10a RPC Women's Bible Study 11:30a Pro Se 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Handbell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir | 27 6:30a Women's Forum | 28 | 29 |
| 30 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Annual Congregational Mtg 11:15a Coffee Fellowship | 31 5:15 Volleyball | | | | | |

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

**RIVERSIDE
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

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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)