



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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The Vision

December 2013

Christmas Liberation

Two thousand years ago, Jews hoped for the coming of a "Messiah." The Messiah was expected to release them from bondage, to loose the chains of oppression and to redeem them from slavery. Can you relate to those hopes and expectations?

I believe that we are in need of a liberator. We are oppressed and live in bondage, even though we don't use the same words very often. But there are many parallels between us and those downtrodden Jews.

Elite rabbis often told the Jews they were not worthy of God's love because they did not have enough money to offer the prescribed animal sacrifices required by the law. The poor were considered "sinners" solely because they were poor. Jews were also told that they were unworthy because they were not Romans, or because they were female, or because they had a physical blemish, or because they spoke with a Galilean accent.

A culture that continually tells you about your unworthiness is spiritually oppressing. Jesus did not turn around the Jewish economy, as much as he turned around their spirits. He told them God loved them the way they were and they should not listen to those voices of oppression.

Oppression in our day comes in different forms, but it is certainly present. We too are told we are unworthy if we do not have the money to afford popular toys, clothes, or cars. We are told we are unworthy if our physical appearance does not match a magazine standard. We are told we are unworthy if we are too old, or too young.

Many of these oppressive messages come from advertisers who make you feel inadequate if you are lacking the funds to purchase their product. Sometimes, we are oppressed by family members who tell us our opinion doesn't count because we are too old to be relevant. Sometimes we are oppressed by a song's lyrics that claim that our only value is in our sexuality.

What are the voices in your world that oppress you? Do they come from the television, radio, internet pop-ups, emails, Facebook? Do they come from family members or friends? How might the Messiah liberate you from that oppression?

Jesus says to you, "God loves you just the way you are—with just that amount of money, with just those blemishes, with just that age, etc." You should not listen to the voices that claim otherwise. In fact, you should tell them, when that is plausible, that they are evil for oppressing you. Tune them out, or shout them down, but don't give in to them. Your Messiah is coming to save you. Have a blessed Christmas.

Your brother in Christ,
Scott



The Egyptians Afflicted the Israelites
1897 Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us by Charles Foster

Worship

December Worship Schedule

December 1 We welcome back to our pulpit the Reverend Ed Dykstra, former interim pastor here at RPC. We will also have communion today.

December 8 "Children's Christmas Pageant" Special worship service led by all of our kids. This will be a mostly "traditional" Christmas Pageant with lots of costumes, scenery and singing. Jenny Kolinski is organizing the worship service.

December 15 *James 5:7-10* "Patience" Advent is the season of patient waiting and hoping as we watch for God's movements among us. James urges patience for the new Christians. Why were they impatient? How did they display patience or impatience with their various situations? Are we patient in matters pertaining to God? How would we behave with patience? What would we do if we were impatient? Why is patience considered a virtue?

December 22 *Matthew 1:18-25* "Joseph's Story" What was Joseph thinking on that first Christmas? Why did he decide to stay with the engagement? What were Joseph's hopes and dreams? What were his struggles and doubts? Do we face similar struggles and doubts? How do we know when we've discerned God's will? I'll do a first person monologue of Joseph's thoughts.

December 24 Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols at 4:00 and Christmas Eve Candlelight Meditation at 10:00. The early service will be the traditional lessons and carols with lots of brief readings of scripture and no commentary. The later service will have some brief commentary, fewer lessons and fewer carols. Electric candles at 4 and wax candles at 10:00.

December 29 Today we welcome a guest preacher to lead our worship while Scott is on vacation.



December 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 | Advent Wreath | Ushers | Flowers | Coffee Fellowship |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| December 1 | Lynda Nadkarni | Gangware Family | Lancaster/Schramm Family | Gangware Family | OPEN |
| December 8 | Youth | Sahlas Family | Children/Youth | Glawe Family | Sunday School |
| December 15 | Michael Aieta | DeVries/Tagliere Families | Will & Susanne Vogel Ranft Family | Ranft Family | Cindy Reynolds & Roberta Gates |
| December 22 | Paige Rambeaux | Gates Family | Harvin Family Claire Gangware | Poinsettias | Kappmeyer/Zander Families |
| December 24 4:00 p.m. | | Lisle Family | OPEN | Poinsettias | |
| December 24 10:00 p.m. | | Nadkarni Family | OPEN | Poinsettias | |
| December 29 | Joyce Van Cura | | Scuff Gross, Dennis Sadilek, Lynn Shannon-Labotka, Marjorie Lewe | OPEN | OPEN |

Session Highlights

During November, the Session:

- ♦ called a Congregational Meeting following worship on December 15 for the purpose of electing church officers;
- ♦ approved a letter of transfer for Margy Martin from RPC to the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Downers Grove;
- ♦ approved placing an informational brochure about the RPC organ in the pews;
- ♦ approved having a mural painted in the “alligator pit” area near the entrance to the boiler room. Janan Cain will draw the design, which will then be painted by church youth;
- ♦ affirmed the policy disallowing unauthorized use of church facilities for personal activities;
- ♦ reviewed a preliminary church budget for 2014; it will be finalized at the December meeting after results of the pledge drive are known;
- ♦ reviewed a long-range planning questionnaire, which will be finalized and sent to all RPC members in January;
- ♦ heard an update from the committee seeking to resolve various conflicts between RPC and the preschool;
- ♦ will invite the Presbytery’s business manager, Eric Heinekamp, to attend the January session meeting to explain various options available for structuring the relationship between the church and the preschool;
- ♦ learned that the sale of Presbytery’s Saugatuck camp property has not yet been completed. The deadline for the purchaser to obtain final approval for his plans from state and local agencies has been extended to February 28, 2014;
- ♦ thanked Laura Vanags for volunteering to update, coordinate and provide support for RPC’s computer systems.

Mary Ann Sadilek
Clerk of Session

December Birthdays



| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| William Carl | 12/1 | Margaret Miezio | 12/19 | Marty Lubeck | 12/25 |
| Richard Crang | 12/2 | Joe Ballerine | 12/20 | Kaki Lynch | 12/27 |
| Christine Canavera | 12/3 | Jacob Buhle | 12/20 | Michael Lynch | 12/27 |
| Luke Yachnin | 12/3 | Michael Hejna | 12/20 | Joey Richards | 12/27 |
| Paul Sterner | 12/4 | Wesley Sedlacek | 12/20 | Jacob Dluhy | 12/28 |
| Richard Regan | 12/6 | Jimmy Sit | 12/20 | Jacob Jansky | 12/28 |
| Steven Staubus | 12/6 | Virginia Wright | 12/20 | Paige Rambeaux | 12/29 |
| Martha Heine | 12/7 | Clayton Ballerine | 12/21 | Ethan Ranft | 12/29 |
| Zach Schiller | 12/7 | Karen Flam | 12/21 | Cal Friend | 12/30 |
| Olivia Glawe | 12/8 | Christopher Halline | 12/21 | Susan Lynch | 12/30 |
| Carol Sprunger | 12/8 | Connor Halline | 12/21 | Hannah Smith | 12/30 |
| Ellen Mitchell | 12/9 | Stanley Schade | 12/21 | Jordan Messner | 12/31 |
| Christine Long | 12/13 | Hannah Ranft | 12/22 | Vicky Vogel | 12/31 |
| Joshua Ranft | 12/16 | Dennis Sadilek | 12/22 | Amanda Wright | 12/31 |



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 December 1 at 1:30 p.m., and the worship service for the residents of the Scottish Home on December 15 at 2:00 p.m.

Trustee for December is Jon Jansky.

Rose Window Update

In his first progress report dated August 12, 2013, Neal Vogel of Restoric LLC recommended that, given the exceptional quality of the angel roundel, we should replace the original kites and lobes with plated opalescent kites and lobes of blue-sky glass to harmonize with the central angel panel.

The Session appointed a committee to visit Botti Art Glass Studio in La Porte, Indiana, to inspect and compare a mockup of sky-blue glass with the original lobes and kites. The Committee recommended to Session that the original lobes and kites be replaced with sky-blue glass. On September 18, at its monthly meeting, the Session voted to replace the lobes and kites with sky-blue glass.

The search for sky-blue glass to match the background glass around the angel has been ongoing since October 1. In his third progress report Mr. Vogel reports that, "The glass search will continue into December and we will not be able to restore the window and fabricate the frame for installation before the weather turns cold." Mr. Vogel suggests that we tentatively schedule the Rose Window installation around Easter as weather allows. He will give us an update on the schedule by late winter.



Botti Studio is a family-run business that has been in continuous operation in the United States for 145 years. Among the local restoration projects by Botti Studio are the Tiffany domes at the Art Institute and the Chicago Cultural Center. More information is available at www.bottistudio.com/



Christmas Memorials: Deadline December 6

Express your love in memory or honor of family and friends through a holiday memorial. Two options are available for memorials: **poinsettias, or a donation to the Capital Improvement Fund.** The poinsettias will be displayed in the sanctuary from December 15 through Christmas Eve. (Plants will remain in the sanctuary for both Christmas Eve services and may be picked up after the 10:00 p.m. service. Those that remain will continue to decorate the sanctuary.) All memorials will be printed in the Sunday worship bulletins. A form to donate a memorial will be in the Sunday bulletins, or is available on the RPC website at www.rpcusa.org/files/Christmas-Memorials-Form.pdf.

Pecans



Thanks to all who purchased the eighty-seven, one-pound bags of freshly harvested pecan halves this year. Thanks to many prepaid orders the distribution on November 10 went smoothly. For each pound sold, \$2.50 goes to [Erie House](http://www.eriehouse.org/) for the Team Tutoring program of college-bound high school students. Pecan sales, handled by our Riverside Presbyterian Women, has been ongoing since as early as 1997, through Margorie Schuham in Elmhurst. To make it even easier, next year all orders for these delicious pecans will be prepaid.

CARERS Corner

CARERS will have the annual Christmas Tree in Fellowship Hall with paper ornaments indicating gifts to be bought and given to mothers and children at the [Constance Morris Home](#). Please take an ornament or two and place your purchase (unwrapped) under the tree. These gifts are so appreciated. Thank you!

Carol O'Meara would like to thank all of you for addressing the holiday cards for incarcerated people who will be spending Christmas separated from their families. Carol said she was able to send 325 cards and is grateful to each and every one of you who helped.



Year-end Charitable Giving

Please keep RPC in mind if you are planning on making a year-end charitable contribution. If you are over 70 ½, you can donate up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to RPC without having to include any of the transfer as gross income. The transfer must be made directly from the IRA to the organization. Transfers count toward the individual's required minimum distribution for the year. This program expires in 2013.



Finance Update

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

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Receipts | \$ 228,703 (69.4% of budget) |
| Disbursements | \$ 268,888 (81.6% of budget) |
| Deficit | \$ 40,185 |



The acaBELLa Ringers share their musical talent with RPC throughout the year.

Children

2013 Christmas Pageant

On December 8 at 10:00 a.m. there will be a very special worship service led by our wonderful Sunday School children. They will perform a traditional Christmas play and you'll get to hear plenty of beautiful Christmas music as well! It's sure to be a memorable and meaningful worship experience for all ages. Dress rehearsal for all children participating is on Saturday, December 7, in varying shifts beginning at noon and continuing throughout the day, and on December 8 during the Sunday School hour.



Scenes from previous Christmas pageants.

Sunday School to host Coffee Fellowship on December 8

All Sunday school families are asked to bring a treat to share for coffee fellowship on December 8. Please bring your yummy contribution to the Social Hall before worship on this day so we could celebrate together after the Christmas Pageant.

December Schedule



Sunday School will be on Winter break on the following dates: December 15, December 22 and December 29. For parents who would like to attend Human Scene during the Sunday School break, supervised crafts will be available for your children in Creation Station from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Sunday School classes will resume on January 5. Merry Christmas!

Godly Play and Childcare There will be no Godly Play on December 1, but childcare for children in first grade and younger will be available. There will be no Godly Play on December 8 so children of all ages can enjoy the Christmas pageant in the sanctuary.

Sunday School Volunteers: A Blessing to our Children

Many thanks to all of our wonderful Sunday School teachers who shared their time and talents since the beginning of this Sunday School year: Jeanine Buttimer, Susan Deems Dluhy, Patti Friend, Jill Glawe, Connie Kelly, Susan Lisle, Susan Lynch, Lisa Marciniak, Hollie and Tony Meizio and Vince Pecis.

And to our wonderfully dedicated Shepherds: Joe Aieta, Frank Fieseler, Margaret Miezio, Abraham Ourth, Hannah and Serina Ranft. Cindy Reynolds, Abby Schwarz and Susan Zander.

Our patient and loving Godly Play leaders and greeters: Kelly Haugland, Emily Kedzie, Lily and Natalie Lisle, Christine Long, Kaki Lynch, Olivia Meyer, Kathryn and Lynda Nadkarni, Rosalyn Pearson, Adeline and Hannah Pecis and Danielle Wolff.

Pictured at right: YIKES! Our RPC third-graders help slay Goliath!



Would you Like to be a Sunday School Volunteer?

If you would like to volunteer to teach a 4-week rotation of Sunday school please contact Jenny Kolinski at kolinski426@comcast.net. Lesson plans are provided to match your unique gifts.



We can't believe that December is already here. The children at Preschool are busier than ever. We will be decorating bulletin boards, making gifts for our families, and learning new songs for our Holiday Show. Try to take a peek at the tree outside of the Preschool, decorated with each preschooler's unique Hamilton (the animal we adopted this year). It is sure to put you in the 'hog'iday spirit.

Registration for the 2014-2015 school year is starting. Applications are available in the rack outside the Church Office and are due on or before January 7.

As the year comes to an end, all of us at the preschool extend a special thank you to Scott Jansen, Linda Hutcheson, Donna Jones, Joel Hastings, Fred Kitch and the entire Church community for their endless support of the preschool. Hope your Holidays are filled with joy!

Youth/Adults

Youth Group News

Join us for Youth Group in December!

Sunday, December 1: *No Youth Group—Thanksgiving Weekend*

Sunday, December 8: Caring Christmas

Saturday, December 14: Junior High Trip Downtown

Friday, December 20: Senior High Christmas Dinner

Sunday, December 22-Sunday December 29: *Youth Group in Recess*

Questions about Youth Group? Contact Tara Gregus at taragregus@yahoo.com.

Teen Scene

A Sunday class for high school students, Teen Scene meets every Sunday at 9:00 in the RPC Library. During December Teen Scene will be in recess on the following dates: December 15, 22 and 29

Scouts



At our November meeting, Pack 24 welcomed 24 new cub scouts during our Bobcat Ceremony. The pack now has 84 active members. Also in November, Pack 24 went to LEGOLand Discovery Center in Schaumburg for an overnight. We had 65 scouts and parents attend this outing and we had a lot of fun building legos, going on rides, and generally adventuring until bedtime at midnight.

Troop 24's main activity for November was the Court of Honor for Eagle Scout Joe Rogers (pictured at right), held on Sunday, November 3, at RPC. Joe is one of at least 77 [Eagle Scouts from Troop 24](#) (early records may not be complete). RPC has sponsored Troop 24 since 1939.



Long-Range Planning Committee to Poll Congregation

The session has formed a long-range planning committee to develop a questionnaire to determine the long-term needs of the church. The questionnaire will be sent to the congregation via email and will also be available at RPC in paper form for those who do not wish to fill it out online. Members will have two months to fill out the survey. At the end of this period, the results will be gathered, analyzed by the committee, and reported back to Session. We hope you will take the time to voice your opinion on the future of RPC through this survey.



Presbyterian Women's Bible Study



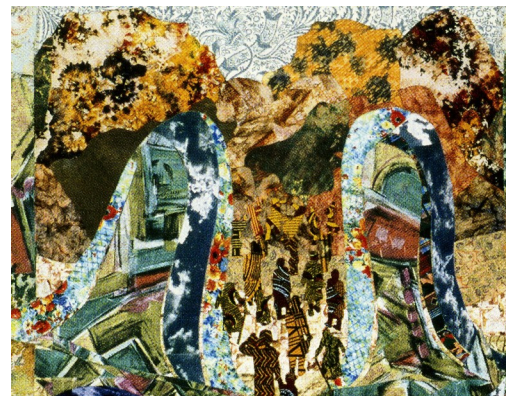
The season of Advent invites us to once again reflect on God's saving actions and the lengths to which God will go to bring freedom and deliverance to us. It is also a time to remember that God's love is for all, and that this same love is meant to shape and guide *our* lives.

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.

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



Fabric art by Lee Porter: *Liberation into the Wilderness* illustrates the Hebrew slaves' passage to freedom through the Red Sea.

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.

December 1 — Rev. Edwin Dykstra **Talk Back: An Exchange of Ideas on Inner City Violence**

Rev. Ed. Dykstra returns with an agenda for confronting what we, as Christians, can do to help address the problems plaguing the youths and residents in inner city Chicago. He will present further information in his dedication to this complex problem, and seek a discussion from the attendees about their role in active participation, starting at scratch.

December 8 — Ms. Alicia Mang **PUST and YUST**

At this very moment, college students in the heart of North Korea are interacting with foreign faculty members and receiving instruction entirely in English — for the first time in their country's history. In the northeastern corner of China, thousands of college students are receiving a tri-lingual education from foreign faculty members whose love and concern for them extends well beyond the classroom. Through the YUST/PUST Foundation, let us continue our commitment to the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, the Yanbian University of Science and Technology, and other precious projects in Northeast Asia. For from Him and through Him, and to Him are all things possible. To Him be all the glory forever! Amen! (*Romans 11:36*)

December 15 — Rev. Scott Jansen **The Real Meaning of Christmas**

Pastor Scott leads us through a discussion of the real meaning of Christmas. We say that God sent to us a "Savior," but what do we mean by that? How was the relationship between God and humans broken? How did Jesus repair it? Why would God choose people like Joseph and Mary to raise Jesus? What does that choice tell us about the purpose of Christ's ministry?

December 22 — *A year wrap-up with a surprise mystery guest* **Special Year-End Program**

Come prepared for an open discussion about the year's Human Scene events, and a big "Thank You" for all the guest speakers. Small refreshments and a cameo appearance of a mystery guest will also be featured. Consider possibilities for the 2014 presentations at the Human Scene.

December 29 — *No Human Scene due to holiday schedule*

Fellowship & Events

Donate Blood. Feed the Hungry. Support Life

Just by coming in to donate blood during this time of year, you will make it easy for you to **TRIPLE** your giving and provide strength, hope and courage to area patients. For over 30 years, Riverside area blood donors have shown their generosity and concern for others by providing the needed blood supply for our community. Many of our RPC members **are** this giving type!



Support life by donating blood on **December 7 at the Riverside Masonic Lodge at 40 W. Forest Ave. or on Saturday, December 8, between 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.** From this and other blood drives, LifeSource will donate \$1 for every unit of blood collected, to our area food bank to help feed the hungry this season. With your participation, the total LifeSource Blood Services community goal is to raise more than \$5,700 and provide approximately 28,600 meals.

To reach this goal they are also holding **food drives** at all of their community donor centers during this 12-day period. When you come in to donate, **please bring a non-perishable food item** to help feed those in need. LifeSource will deliver all food donations to local food banks.

Walk-in donors are welcome; but advance appointments help them plan for staffing to efficiently handle the donation process. Please schedule your appointment today by calling 877-LIFESOURCE (877-543-3768).

Christmas Pageant December 8

On December 8, at 10:00 a.m., there will be a very special worship service led by our wonderful Sunday School children. Dress rehearsal for all children participating is on Saturday, December 7, in varying shifts beginning at noon and continuing throughout the day, and on December 8 during the Sunday School hour.

Caring Christmas December 8

The holidays are coming! So remember to mark your calendars for the annual Caring Christmas fellowship on **Sunday, December 8**, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Start with a delicious chili supper and then help make and assemble holiday decorations to be shared with our members in senior living.

Messiah December 15

RPC's 28th annual Handel's Messiah will take place on Sunday, December 15, at 4:00 p.m. A 14-member orchestra accompanies a 40+ choir with four professional soloists. This performance is child-friendly! We don't do the entire Messiah; the performance lasts about 1 hour and 20 minutes. We welcome young singers to join us as well. We have had children from 5th grade and up sing with us in the past. RPC hosts an amazing Wassail Bowl Reception immediately following the performance. Interested in participating? Contact Sally Sloane at musikhse@comcast.net.





December 2013

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 9a Sunday School 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 1:30p Cantata Service | 2 5:15p Volleyball 7p Stewardship Comm Mtg | 3 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 7p Personnel Comm Mtg | 4 Office Closed 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:20p Chancel Choir | 5 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group | 6 | 7 10a Messiah Choral Rehearsal |
| 8 9a Sunday School 10a Worship—Pagaent 11a Coffee Fellowship 11:15a Endowment Comm Mtg 4p Caring Christmas | 9 5:15p Volleyball 7p Finance Comm Mtg 7:30p Trustees Mtg | 10 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg | 11 Office Closed 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:20p Chancel Choir | 12 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group | 13 | 14 10a Messiah Choral Rehearsal |
| 15 9a Human Scene 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship 2p Scottish Home Worship 4p Messiah 5:30p Wassail Bowl Reception Vision Deadline | 16 5:15p Volleyball | 17 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg 7p Deacons Mtg | 18 Office Closed 4:15p Singers 4:45p Ringers 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir 7:30p Session Mrg | 19 6:30a Women's Forum 7p Girls' Group | 20 10a CARERS Comm Mtg 6p Sr High Christmas Dinner | 21 |
| 22 9a Human Scene 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship | 23 5:15p Volleyball | 24 6:30a Men's Forum 4p Lessons & Carols 10p Candlelight Meditation | 25 Christmas  | 26 6:30a Women's Forum | 27 | 28 |
| 29 NO Sunday School or Human Scene 10a Worship 11a Coffee Fellowship | 30 5:15p Volleyball | 31 6:30a Men's Forum 9:30a Staff Mtg | | | | |

RIVERSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

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Riverside Presbyterian Church

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More information about the
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