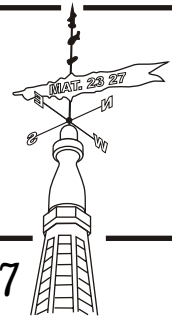


The Weathervane

RAYMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH, United Church of Christ Newsletter



December 2007

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THE YEAR OF THE SLEIGH

In my town, Santa Claus arrives each year at precisely 7:00 P.M. on the first Monday in December and goes into the white New England church on the corner of Main Street. That is also the night that the huge town Christmas tree is lit, and the children have their chance to sit with Santa and tell him all their Christmas dreams.

When our children were young, I took them every year to the festivities. We always arrived early, just in case Santa pulled in before the appointed hour (He never did.). The adults stood about with shoulders hunched against the cold listening to the high school chorus sing Christmas carols. The children, their noses and cheeks bright red, ran round and round on the sometimes snow covered lawn in an endless game of tag with rules that only a child could possibly understand.

Their young ears, however, were always attuned to the first sound of a siren or glimpse of a flashing light. You see, Santa arrived atop a fire truck, smiling and waving, having taken the short trip in great ceremony and style from the fire station down the road.

The children excitedly waved back and raced to the church fellowship hall to be first in line to talk with this wonderful symbol of Christmas. You see, everyone knew that this was no deputized elf or, even worse, someone's father parading around in a rented Santa suit. This was the real deal, Santa himself direct from the North Pole.

How could we be sure? Easy! He wore a leather, not plastic, wide black belt, and his suit was worn with age at the elbows and cuffs. And, above all, he had a real beard – white and flowing – and a genuine twinkle in his eyes.

Somehow the children and I were always some of the last to see Santa as boys and girls seemed to emerge from nowhere at the stroke of 7:00 to be among the first in line for their annual visit. It was not surprising then that, after feasting on hot cocoa and cookies, we were among the last to leave. One year when our son, Padraic, was small and we were walking toward our car, he looked up at me, his hand clutching mine. "Mom," he announced. "I want to see Santa's sleigh. Can we go and see it on the way home?"

I told him that I was not sure where the sleigh would be. Paddy answered immediately and confidently. "Oh," he replied. "It's parked behind the fire

The Weathervane is published monthly for distribution at the first of each month. Articles may be submitted as paper copy, electronically via disk or email by the 20th of each month preceding the issue for it to be included in. Computer files should be submitted as MSWord (.doc) or rich text format (.rtf) and clipart/photos as jpg or tif. Hand written articles may be submitted as well. If you have a computer/email question or problem contact John Hanley.

Articles can be dropped off at the church office, mailed or emailed to: Raymond Village Community Church, P.O. Box 285 (Main St.), Raymond, ME 04071 - office@rvccme.org or to John Hanley, 221 Valley Rd, Raymond, ME 04071 - weathervane@rvccme.org - Thank you for reading our newsletter!

station, of course.”

I was not sure where all of this was going to end up, but I said that we could at least drive by. Some moments passed before we reached our car, and everyone was appropriately settled in car seats and ready to go. We drove to the fire station, and Paddy even got out of the car and looked behind the building. There was not a sleigh in sight.

He was disappointed, but only because we had clearly arrived too late. You see, he told me, Santa had already beaten a hasty retreat to the North Pole to get his elves busy making all of those toys that the children in Cumberland, Maine, wanted to find in their stockings and beneath their Christmas trees on December 25th.

We have a choice in life, you know. We can believe – just believe - as children do, or we can choose instead to be overcome by the jaded cynicism of adulthood. We can believe that a better world is possible, or we can presume that this one in all its brokenness is as good as it gets. We can believe that once long ago a baby was born in Bethlehem who, when he was grown, brought the world such a message of Good News that even now we can hardly believe that it is true, or we can decide it was all a made up story of once upon a time and long, long ago.

We can believe in Emmanuel, God with Us, or we can figure that God stopped speaking in this world many eons ago.

We can believe that Christmas - even here and even now - is a time of miracles that even us can be a part of, or we can.....

PRAYER CONCERNS

Our prayers of concern go out to:

Those in our Church Family

Helene Bent, Tom Eldridge, Rita Gerry, Joan Morton's family especially her grandson Justin and Wayne Whitney.

In our Extended Family

Shawn Adams, Darlene and Howie Dodge, Daniel Knight, Dottie and Mark Stults.

In our Community

Tom Blackburn, Dora and Bobby Durgin, Liz Harvey, Patricia Ann McCormick, (friend of Elaine York), The Webber family, all of our service men and women, and all others near and far who are sick or in need.

Lectionary Lessons for December

December 2nd – First Sunday in Advent and Hanging of the Greens

Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

December 9th – Second Sunday in Advent and St. Lucia Procession

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

December 16th – Third Sunday in Advent and Christmas Pageant

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

December 23rd – Fourth Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 7" 10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

December 30th – First Sunday after Christmas and New Member Sunday

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Lectionary Readings for January

January 6th – Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

January 13th – First Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

January 20th – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11
I Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

January 27th – Third Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

**Summary of November 8, 2007
Coordinating Council Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, on Thursday November 8th. Present were: Dick, Lori, Nancy F., Nancy Y., Rolf and Brian

Absent: Jane, Rodney

Rolf offered the opening prayer to begin our meeting.

Minutes from our October 11th Council Meeting were unanimously approved, as amended.

Pastoral Reflection: Rev. Nancy brought two opposing articles dealing with the recent King Middle School contraceptive issue. We read the articles and then discussed our views of the specific issue, as well as discussing what it means on a larger scale. Many questions were raised such as: Would things be different if more moms were at home when the kids got there? Is it the parents job alone to teach morality? Should churches be weighing in louder on this issue? What is the answer for children who sadly have no loving adults to guide them? We all agreed that the situation has certainly gotten out of hand, and that no one really has a simple solution for it.

Planning for the Annual Meeting

We discussed the different actions that would need to be taken to insure a smoothly run meeting.

1. Format: Start in church as in past years with the budget and elections – break for lunch which will be pot luck – finish the meeting in the vestry.
2. Presentations: Find out how many and how much time each will take.
3. Food: Pot luck – let the congregation know – it has always been very successful.
4. Child Care: A couple of the older youth will be asked to offer baby-sitting.
5. Other: Misc. items – Lori asks that council members have their annual reports e-mailed to the office the week of December 16th as word.doc.

Reports of the Coordinators

Treasurer (Rod) provided us with the monthly statements in our office boxes. Council reviewed October month-end Financial Report, showing Income YTD. The council accepted the Treasurer's report as given. We are working on the budget for the annual meeting.

Church Clerk (Lori) Nothing new to report this month.

**RVCC FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT
- Through October 2007 -**

Year to Date Receipts Budget	65,845.00
Year to Date Receipts Actual	<u>76,274.86</u>
Favorable (Unfavorable) to budget	10,429.86
Year to Date Expense Budget	66,751.57
Year to Date Expense Actual	<u>85,651.50</u>
Favorable (Unfavorable) to budget	(18,899.93)
Net Income (Loss) Budget	(906.57)
Net Income (Loss) Actual	(9,376.64)
Favorable (Unfavorable) to budget	(8,470.07)
Budget Receipts for the Month	5,657.00
Actual Receipts for the Month	<u>7,245.49</u>
Favorable (Unfavorable) to budget	1,588.49

We are looking for a new clerk to join the council for 2008. Church Clerk is a great way for someone interested in joining the RVCC Council to begin. As with any leadership group, new members are vital to growth and change. Please consider stepping into this position before the new year begins. Anyone interested in this area should speak to Rev. Nancy or any council member.

Trustee (Dick) The fall clean-up day will be Saturday November 10th. The carpets throughout the church will be cleaned before Christmas. We are still looking into getting the chimney cap and crown done.

1. On Saturday, October 13th, Dick met with Mark Connelly to have the current heating system assessed. Mark told Dick that we're in good shape with our current equipment. It would cost between \$5,000 – \$6,000 to upgrade the boiler. The burners are being serviced by Downeast Energy on December 4th.

Since the locked file cabinet was damaged in the recent break-in, the Council will be considering whether to replace it or purchase a small, fire proof safe for the office.

Missions Committee (Brian) Thanksgiving Baskets – The count is currently at 40 and will likely grow a little before all is said and done. Other churches in the area are supporting our efforts this year. Andy Morrison is spearheading this years Thanksgiving Basket mission! Thank you Andy!

Mitten Tree – Beverly Smith-Petersen will lead the mitten tree project again this year. More information to follow as we get closer to Christmas and have a family

Continued on page 4

continued from page 3

chosen.

The Christmas Fund – This UCC offering will be received again at each of the Christmas Eve services and promotional materials will begin to be used soon.

Monday Meals – Brian will be looking into getting RVCC involved again in the Monday Meal program. He has been contacted by the folks who run this mission and is convinced that the need is great. Missions will be looking for someone in the church community to lead this effort. More information on this as it develops, and what it will require of us.

Christian Ed Committee (Rev. Nancy) The classrooms have been painted and they look great!

Marilee Dunklee will be creating the Annual Christmas Pageant and it will be performed on December 16th. All ages youth of the church we be asked to be involved.

The C.E. Task Force is looking into new ways to have the children involved in worship.

Stewardship: Pledge letters have gone out and our Stewardship celebration will be on Sunday November 11th.

Deacons (Rev. Nancy) Advent preparations are being made. Hanging of the Greens service will be on Dec. 2nd followed by lunch and caroling. An Advent Vespers service is being planned for the second week of December.

Moderator (Rolf) Items to report have been covered in other areas.

Pastor (Rev. Nancy) Nancy will be away from November 25th - December 3rd. On Sunday December 2nd (Hanging of the Greens) the deacons will run the service.

Rev. Nancy will be applying to a Summer Collegium held at the Virginia Theological Seminary in the summer of 2008. The Council will support fully Nancy's desire to attend. Rolf, Nancy Y. and Lori will meet ASAP as council representatives to answer the application questions that are our responsibility. Deadline for applying is December 15th.

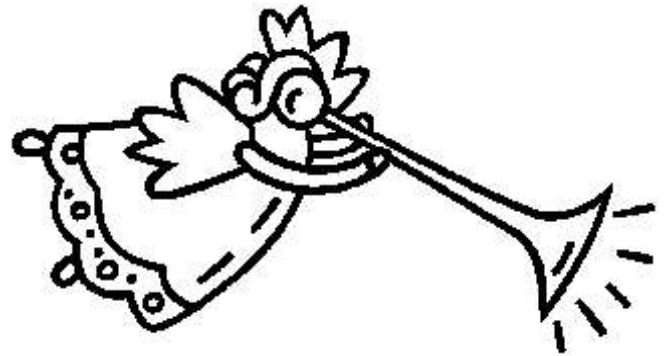
Old Business: Trustees to look into additional lighting for the choir loft.

New Business: There will be no Weathervane in January. This is how we proceeded last year as Annual Meeting preparations are a heavy load at this time of year. Therefore, in our December issue both January

and February's calendar of events will be printed. John and Lori ask that council members keep this in mind when submitting their articles and news items for this next newsletter.

Next Council meeting will be Thursday December 13, 2007; at 7pm. Prayer will be offered by Lori.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Lambert, Church Clerk.



Christmas Pageant 2007

We are beginning plans for another wonderful pageant performance by the children of our church, Sunday, December 16th.

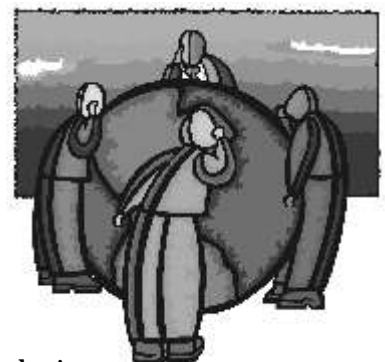
We need to know what children are available for the various practices and the performance. We are looking for all children and youth. We need older youth to help with the set, costumes, hosting and possible speaking and/or singing parts. Parents, we also need help with coaching, crowd control during practices and providing cues for the day of the pageant.

Practices are likely to be the first two or three Saturdays in December, mid-morning and possibly one or two mid-week rehearsals. This schedule may change if there are any conflicts. Children please talk to your Sunday School teacher, Marilee or Leigh Walker (655-2135) so we can begin putting the program together.

Thanks!

How to Build Community

Seek to understand...learn from new and uncomfortable angles....know that no one is silent though many are not heard....work to change that!



Mission News

As we enter into the Advent season, our Mission and Outreach efforts are one way we celebrate the coming of Christ's birth. We hope you will join us in one – or many – of our efforts.

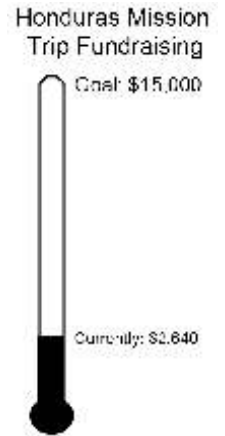
This year, RVCC led the development of the Thanksgiving baskets for families in the Raymond area. Along with other local churches, and with wonderful support from the Dielectric Corporation, we were able to provide a basket for everyone who expressed a need – about 50 in all! Thanks so much to everyone who supported this effort – from the donation of food items to helping manage the packing and distribution. Literally hundreds of people had a more joyful Thanksgiving as a result of your efforts.

As the weather grows colder, the demand on the Raymond Food Pantry grows. Our donations have been helping fill the gaps in their supplies. We continue our request for donations of paper goods (paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, and facial tissues), as well as coffee and jelly. You can drop off your donations on the vestry Mission table and we will consolidate them and bring them to the Food Pantry.



Some of the Thanksgiving meals baskets stand ready for pick-up.

The Honduras Mission Team continues its successful fundraising efforts. To date, over \$2,600 has been raised, including over \$500 from the sale of the RVCC Youth Singers Christmas CD. The CD makes a great Christmas gift and is available for sale after church each Sunday and is also available at the Good Life Market on Route 302.



Would you like to help a family in need with a gift for under the tree this Christmas? The Mitten Tree program helps do just this, anonymously identifying family members of local families who could use some help for Christmas. Beverly Smith Petersen is kind enough to again lead the Mitten Tree - more information will be available at church where you can pick up a mitten request to fulfill.

The 2007 Christmas Fund Offering (formerly known as Veterans of the Cross) will be received at the Christmas Eve services. The money raised through the Christmas Fund Offering is the major provider of money for the Ministerial Assistance programs of the United Church of Christ, assisting both active and retired low-income employees and clergy of the UCC. We hope you will consider this worthy cause in your Holiday giving.

The Heifer Project is coming in January! This youth-focused fundraising program helps buy domestic animals for impoverished areas of the world to help create sustainable food sources. We are thankful to have the Stevenson family again leading this Mission outreach effort.

We hope your Christmas season is one where the true meaning and spirit of Christmas can shine through for you.

Leigh and Brian Walker, Mission Coordinators

Christmas Card List

When you are making out your Christmas card list this year, please include the following:

**A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20307-5001**

If you approve of the idea, please pass it on to your friends.

What's Going On In Sunday School? – Hope to See you There!!

Infant/Toddler and Kindergarten Room

Throughout December, the children will be learning about the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. They will be hearing about how God's love came down to earth and the real reason why we celebrate Christmas. In our age of secularism and consumerism, it will be a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn about the spiritual meaning of the holiday.

In January, they will be learning about Jesus as a young boy through stories in the New Testament as well as about the beginnings of his ministry when he was grown. They will be hearing several well-known Bible stories.

What's Going on in Grades 1-3?

December 2nd – All Church Advent Celebration

All are invited to attend with their families the traditional Hanging of the Greens Service, potluck brunch, and caroling in a horse drawn wagon

No Sunday School

December 9th – Isaiah 11:1-10

Theme: To imagine our part in creating God's vision for a peaceful world.

We will be reading another story from Isaiah about another message Isaiah got from God. It was a dream for a wonderful world of love. We will be making Animal ornaments explaining God's special message and will talk about doing a special service project for the Christmas season.

December 16th – Children's and Youth Christmas Pageant

December 23rd – Family Sunday No Sunday School

December 30th – Family Sunday No Sunday School

January 6th – Matthew 2:1-12

Theme: To meet the magi and follow them to Bethlehem

We will learn about the magi and the special star that they followed. We will be making Window stars and egg carton camels.

January 13th – Matthew 3:13-17

Theme: To know that we are chosen and loved by God

We will learn about the baptism of Jesus through the Biblical story as well as water painting and making snowglobes.

January 20th – John 1:29-42

Theme: To learn about the disciples, how Jesus asked

them to follow him and discover who he really was

We will be read about Andrew and what it was like for him to meet Jesus. We will be sing some songs, have a scavenger hunt, and make "Time to Share" containers.

January 27th – Matthew 4:12-23

Theme: To learn how we can respond to Jesus' invitation to learn to live in God's way.

We will be playing a game showing how easy it is to follow Jesus. We also will be making fish mobiles.

What's Going on in Grades 4-6?

December 2nd

All-Church Advent Celebration with the traditional Hanging of the Greens Service, potluck brunch, and caroling in a horse drawn wagon.

We will help to host the brunch

December 9th – Isaiah 11: 1-10

Theme: Christmas is Coming!

We will play some Christmas songs using the chimes and also do a Christmas craft.

December 16th – Children's and Youth Christmas Pageant

December 23rd – Family Sunday No Sunday School

December 30th – Family Sunday No Sunday School

January 6th – Matthew 2:1-12

Theme: To follow the star with the magi as they seek God's gift to the world

We will make a sand candle while discussing how we can spread God's light and love in the world.

January 13th – Matthew 3:13-17

Theme: To hear God's words, "You are my beloved" and figure out what those words really mean for us.

We will read some passages from Scripture and as a group create an echo litany that tells the story of Jesus' baptism.

January 20th – John 1:29-42

Theme: To learn about Jesus through his names.

We will be doing something really different and creating a guided meditation walk in the classroom.

January 27th – Matthew 4:12-23

Theme: To join with the first disciples and learn the way of God as they did from Jesus, Ever wanted to be in a movie? We will be using a camcorder and interviewing each other for a "Breaking News Story" on how ordinary people can help spread the word of God.

Getting to Know Our Volunteers

As the momentum for the Christmas season gathers, so does the anticipation of another of the pageants created for our young people at the able hands of Marilee Dunklee. Marilee's talents and love for what she is doing, and the people she is working with, is evident at every turn. This month she has agreed to give us her viewpoint of the artistry we experience in her production, and her feelings about this major annual event at RVCC and the part she plays.

Question #1

What is your favorite part of doing your volunteer activity?

For the better part of thirty years, my main church volunteering has been with the children's music program. The favorite part for me is, in a word, the kids! I love the special energy they bring and their special interpretation of things spiritual. I adore watching them grow in skill and confidence, and I am always amazed at how they, without fail, rise to every occasion to bring warmth and inspiration when they sing and perform. To watch their eyes as they perform and to watch the joyful expressions on the faces of church members – now those give me goosebumps, and sometimes tears, and always pride!

Question #2

Why did you decide to get involved in this activity or project?

Originally I started a church children's choir when my own daughter turned three. That was in 1979. Then came my son. And the rest, as they say, is history. It got into my blood, and here I am – with, not two children, but fifteen or twenty.

Question #3

What did you learn about yourself or about your church family that surprised you through this activity or project?

What I learn about myself and my church family each time we put together a children's pageant is no surprise but is always a new and refreshing lesson in love and teamwork. Each year I learn anew about parents and how anxious they are to pitch in and help and do whatever is necessary to bring off the program – make costumes, build sets, drive kids to rehearsal! Every pageant is a team effort, a collaboration of love! What do I learn about myself? Every single year I learn all over again how much I LOVE the kids and LOVE seeing them minister in such a powerful way to the church family "And a little child shall lead them." Amen!

Thoughts on Prayer: It takes Practice

Rev. Peter Panagore wrote the following for his daily devotions e-mail:

At night, certain stars are more easily seen by looking beside the star rather than right at it. If you look right at the star, it will vanish. If you look beside the star, it becomes visible again. Silent prayer is like this in that a feeling of peace may arise. This is good, but don't pay attention to it. If you pay attention, it will vanish. Pay attention to your breath and prayer. Look tangentially at your feelings. Don't stare. That feeling of peace, or bliss, isn't God. It's just a good feeling. It's a calming feeling, and may help you through your day, but it isn't God. Centering Prayer doesn't so much lead to God, as it is an exercise in showing up and flag-waving. God likes commitment. Praying every day, even when it doesn't feel right, is actually very effective. It's like showing up even though you don't want to be there. God notices that. Prayer is like flag-waving at God, saying, "I am here! I am here! Notice me!" The Practice of Centering Prayer is the art of listening, being still, opening a channel, and paying attention to God. The benefits include being able to rid yourself of songs stuck inside your head, and gaining control of the noise inside your head. It takes a lot of daily practice over a long period of time, but it works. The more you pray, the more you'll become aware that God is present right now in your life, and is as near to you as your breath.

The **Weathervane** will be taking a short break over the Christmas and New Years Day Holidays so there will be no January issue but fear not, February's issue will be packed with all your favorites and more!

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone who works on the Weathervane.

Thanks to All Who Donated Flowers!

Thanks to the following people who donated flowers for our altar in November: Vicki Gordan, Diane Goosetrey, Jane Jordan, and EVERYONE who participated in creating our cornucopia on Thanksgiving Sunday.



From the Deacons Table

Keeping our sanctuary a quiet and peaceful place before worship starts on Sunday morning, has been a goal the deacons and Rev. Nancy have been working on for the past 2 years. We want our members and visitors to have a place where they can relax and prepare their hearts and minds for worship.

The Fellowship Café which opens at 9:30am each Sunday morning has provided a space for us to meet, greet, and enjoy each other before as well as after the worship service. Various groups within the church have agreed to serve the café with coffee and snacks before the service as well as after. The Deacons started with the last 2 weeks in September. The Honduras Mission Team provided for the month of October, and the Very Occasional All Men's Choir, the month of November. We look forward to the other groups that have agreed to serve during the year. A noticeable difference in the sanctuary before worship since the start of The Fellowship Café has created a much more peaceful and relaxed atmosphere for all who enter.

Advent activities at RVCC will start of with the Hanging of the Greens on December 2nd, along with decorating the tree, a sleigh ride and caroling to follow the worship service. December 9th we will celebrate communion together, along with a baptism and a special St. Lucia procession by our children, and special Norwegian music by our choir. December 16th will be our annual Christmas Pageant December 23rd we will have our Christmas Sunday service, December 24th our annual Christmas Eve and candle light service at 4:30 and 11:00pm.

In addition to all these activities, we will enjoy the special music of the Very Occasional All Men's Choir, and the Youth Chorus. Also a Healing Service is planned for Tuesday Dec. 11th. More information on this our 3rd annual service will be posted in the bulletin.

After worship on December 9th and December 16th, the Deacons will meet with Rev. Nancy and all who are interested in becoming new members or associate members of RVCC at our New Members service on December 30th.

Poinsettias are beautiful at Christmas time. Rosemary Tripp and her family have traditionally filled and lit the Poinsettia tree. This tree requires 16/6" pots of RED poinsettias. Members are encouraged to bring a plant to church on the 2nd and 9th of December to help fill this beautiful tree. We will have forms available if you want a memorial or a special event or a just because to

be printed in the bulletin.

We hope that many will join us for an exciting advent season this year and share in the joy of the season.

In Christ Love and Service,

Linda Eldridge, Deacon Coordinator

Christmas Poinsettias....It's That Time of Year Again!

Everyone is invited to decorate our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas with the donation of one or more poinsettias. The size and color is your choice.

However, if you wish to have your poinsettia as part of our traditional poinsettia tree, it must be in a 6 inch pot. Bring in your poinsettia on Sunday, December 2nd, 9th, or 16th.

We will display our poinsettia tree when it is completely full.

There will be forms available for you to designate if your

plant is in honor, celebration, or memory of someone special. The designations will be printed in the bulletin for worship on December 23rd and at both Christmas Eve services.



Thoughts on Stewardship...It's More than Just the Money!

Those who attended worship on Stewardship Sunday learned that money is really a sidelight to stewardship, an administrative necessity. Stewardship is learning to recognize our blessings (ALL OF THEM), figuring out who's ultimately responsible for providing them (GOD), and deciding how we show our gratitude (SHARING OF OUR TIME, TALENTS, TREASURES). During the powerpoint/slide show presentation, we were reminded of all we might be thankful for at RVCC.

We also wrote down the first word that comes to mind when we think of our church. Here's what we came up with: fellowship, warm and caring, ongoing, community, faith-full, safety and help, family and love, growing, warm, welcome, home, a small congregation where my volunteer efforts and financial contributions really make a difference and matter, struggling/hopeful, family of choice, friendly, committed Christians, gracious, believers, place to learn about God, good very good, giving (because it is better to give than to receive), COOL!!!

Who Said That?

Quotes for November 4th.

“If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

“Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.”

“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”
~ Each by St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis of Assisi

Born: September 26, 1181.

Died: October 3, 1226.

St. Francis of Assisi was a Roman Catholic friar and the founder of the Order of Friars Minor, more commonly known as the Franciscans. He is known as the patron saint of animals, birds, and the environment, and it is customary for Catholic churches to hold ceremonies honoring animals around his feast day of October 4th. Around February 24, 1209, Francis heard a sermon that changed his life. The sermon was about Matthew 10:9, in which Christ tells his followers that they should go forth and proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven was upon them, that they should take no money with them, nor even a walking stick or shoes for the road. Francis was inspired to devote himself wholly to a life of poverty. Clad in a rough garment, barefoot, and, after the Evangelical precept, without staff or scrip, he began to preach repentance. He was soon joined by his first follower, a prominent fellow townsman, the jurist Bernardo di Quintavalle, who contributed all that he had to the work. Within a year Francis had eleven followers. Francis chose never to be ordained a priest and the community lived as “lesser brothers,” *fratres minores* in Latin. In 1209 Francis led his first eleven followers to Rome to seek permission from Pope Innocent III to found a new religious order. At first his attempt to speak with the Pope was refused. The following night, however, Innocent dreamt of a poor man holding up a crumbling church. The next morning, he recognized the man in the dream as the poor man he had refused the previous day, and reversed his decision. Near the end of his life, he was brought back to the Porziuncola. He was brought to the transito, the hut for infirm friars, next to the Porziuncola. Here, in the place where it all began, feeling the end approaching, he spent the last days of his life dictating his spiritual

testament. He died on the evening of October 3, 1226 singing Psalm 141. His feast day is observed October 4th.

Quotes for November 11th
Reflection on Veterans’ Day

“Today marks the anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I, a day now known in the US as Veterans’ Day. I never served in the military, for which I am sure they are thankful. Like many others, I certainly have not approved of all the military adventures in which our nation has participated, but I honor those who have served.
On this day I say, Thank You!”

~ Author Unknown

Sentiment for November 18th including a partial quote from St. Augustine

In the Protestant church, there are two sacraments baptism and communion. According to St. Augustine, sacraments are “visible signs of God’s invisible grace.” When we baptize a child, something mystical and holy happens.

St. Augustine

Born: November 13, 354.

Died: August 28, 430.

Aurelius Augustinus, Augustine of Hippo, or Saint Augustine was a philosopher and theologian, and was bishop of the North African city of Hippo Regius for the last third of his life. Augustine is one of the most important figures in the development of Western Christianity, and is considered to be one of the church fathers. He framed the concepts of original sin and just war. In Roman Catholicism and the Anglican Communion, he is a saint and pre-eminent Doctor of the Church, and the patron of the Augustinian religious order. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of Reformation teaching on salvation and grace.

Quote for November 25th

“When babies look beyond you and giggle, maybe they’re seeing angels.”

~ Quoted in *The Angels’ Little Instruction Book*
by Eileen Elias Freeman, 1994

Eileen Elias Freeman was profiled in the August Weathervane.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Lambert

Credits: Various Internet Sources

Join Us for Advent and Christmas Celebrations!

December 2nd First Sunday in Advent (10:00 A.M.)

Hanging of the Greens Service followed by All-Church Potluck Brunch and caroling throughout the Village in a horse drawn wagon. Bring muffins, coffeecake, finger foods to share.

December 9th Second Sunday in Advent (10:00 A.M.)

Worship includes the Lighting of the Advent Wreath, Communion, and a St. Lucia Procession by our Sunday School children.

December 11th Candlelight Vespers Service (7:00 P.M.)

A quiet and contemplative service of carols, Scripture, and other readings to help us heal where it hurts and to take hold of all that Advent is meant to be. Please bring a small stone.

December 16th Third Sunday in Advent (10:00 A.M.)

Worship includes the Lighting of the Advent Wreath and a Christmas Pageant with the children and youth.

December 23rd Fourth Sunday in Advent (10:00 A.M.)

Worship includes the Lighting of the Advent Wreath, special choral music with trumpet accompaniment, and favorite Christmas carols. At Coffee Hour, we will have a birthday party for Jesus (and a gift for each child).

December 24th Christmas Eve

Family Candlelight Service at 4:30 P.M. followed by cookies and hot cocoa in the Vestry. The choir will sing as we re-tell the story of the Nativity.

Candlelight Service at 11:00 P.M. with carols, readings, and communion. This is a quietly beautiful way to usher in Christmas Day.

December 30th First Sunday after Christmas (10:00 A.M.)

Worship with Christmas carols and a chance to bid good riddance to the best forgotten parts of 2007, so that we can embrace 2008.

The receiving in life to me is one of the greatest gifts that we give another person. And it's very hard. Because when you give, you're in much greater control. But when you receive something - you're vulnerable.

~ Fred ("Mr.") Rogers

Are You Ready to Tie the Knot?

Are you ready to explore the possibility of becoming a regular or associate member of RVCC? Perhaps you have been a part of this church family for a few short months or many years. It doesn't matter! If you are ready to "tie the knot" and take that final step to make a formal commitment to RVCC, then come to our New Member Discussions on two successive Sundays, December 9 and 16 from 11:30-12:30. We will welcome new members during worship on December 30th. Please sign up in the Deacons' Corner or contact the Church Office if you are interested (655-7749, office@rvccme.org). Questions? Can only make one discussion time? Be in touch with Rev. Nancy.

What is an Associate Member Anyway?

We have two kinds of membership at RVCC. You can choose to be a Regular or an Associate member. If RVCC is the only church you feel committed to, then Regular membership is for you. If you want to maintain ties to a second church, then consider becoming an Associate member of RVCC. Perhaps you spend winters away and participate in another church. Perhaps you have ties to another church in the area that you just want to maintain. Perhaps you always still want to be a part of the church you grew up in. Those are all reasons to consider becoming an Associate member. An Associate member has all the privileges of regular membership except for voting to dissolve the church. Associate membership is an opportunity at RVCC to maintain dual church membership.

At the Gate of the Year

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied, "Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God - That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God - Trod gladly into the night - He led me towards the hills - And the breaking of day in the lone east.

So heart be still! What need our human life to know - If God hath comprehension?

In all the dizzy strife of things - Both high and low, God hideth his intention.

~ Minnie Louise Harkins, included by Britain's King George VI in his Christmas 1939 radio broadcast



Photos from the Fall Clean Up



Come to the Annual Meeting!

We need YOU at the Annual Meeting following worship on January 20th! We will vote on new officers and the budget in the sanctuary directly after worship and then will head to the Vestry for a potluck lunch and to finish our business. This time is often devoted to discussion topics from various committees and is a wonderful time for everyone to discuss new ideas, to celebrate our successes over the past year, and to look ahead to a terrific 2008! It's almost like a party and it won't be the same without you. Hope you will plan to come!



Why Do You Bring Your Children to Church and Sunday School?

Thoughts to ponder by George Barna:

“Adults essentially carry out the beliefs they embraced when they were young.”

“Fundamental perspectives on truth, integrity, meaning, justice, morality, and ethics are formed quite early in life. After their first decade, most people simply refine their views as they age with out a wholesale change in those leanings.”

“In situations where children became mature Christians (maintained church involvement), we usually found a symbiotic partnership between their parents and their church.”

Sunday School Wish List

The children and youth group are so proud of the Sunday School classrooms they repainted this fall. Be watching for news of an Open House, so you can see all that has happened in our Sunday School wing. As we put the finishing touches on the classrooms, here are a couple of items the children need:

1. Large cushions to sit on.
2. Area rug for the young children's (grades 1-3) classroom.

If you can help with either of these items, the children, teachers, and Christian Education Task Force would be so grateful!

Come to the Fellowship Café!

Every Sunday morning from 9:30-10:00 A.M., everyone is invited to gather in the Vestry before worship for coffee and conversation. The Fellowship Café is our place for Sunday morning socializing before worship. Feel free to go up to the sanctuary at any time, but when you do, please be quiet, so that others may prepare for worship. Thanks to the Youth Group for hosting the Café in December!



Idea of the Month...to Introduce your Friends to RVCC

1. Invite them to go caroling in a horse drawn wagon on Sunday, December 2nd beginning at noon.
2. Invite them to the Hanging of the Greens service on December 2nd and maybe they would like to stay for brunch afterward.
3. Tell them what time our candlelight Christmas Eve services are – the Family Service is at 4:30 P.M. and the Late Service is at 11:00 P.M.

Do You Know Who Your Pastors Were?

We continue to fill in the gaps of our history! Here's what we have so far for our pastors:

1879 –

Rev. William Twort

1962 – 1970

Rev. John MacDuffie

1970 – 1975

Rev. John Nelson, Jr.

1976 – 1978

Rev. William Hamilton

1979 – 1984

Rev. Virginia Child

1986 – 1993

Rev. Dana-Stetson Reed

1995 – 2003

Rev. Richard Tulip

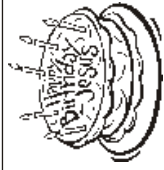
2005 – present

Rev. Nancy Foran

If you know of any resources that might help us find out who our earliest pastors were, please contact the Church Office at 655-7749 or office@rvccme.org or Rev. Nancy at revnancy@rvccme.org.

December 2007

RVCC Calendar online - check for the latest updates at www.rvccme.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					7:00 pm AA	1 RVCC Christmas Fair!
2 10:00 am Worship Hanging of the Greens!	3 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	4 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 🎵	5 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	6	7:00 pm AA	8
9 10:00 am Worship	10 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting 6:30 pm Girl Scout Troop 2093 Meeting 7:00 pm BS Troop 800 Committee Meeting	11 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 🎵	12 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm - Deacons 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	13 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Church Council	14 7:00 pm AA	15
16 10:00 am Worship Christmas Pageant!	17 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	18 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 🎵	19 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	20 7:00 pm AA	21 7:00 pm AA	22
23 10:00 am Worship	24 4:30 pm Family Candlelight Service! 11:00 pm Communion Candlelight Service!	25  Christmas Day	26 6:30 am Men's Fellowship	27	28 6:00 pm Troop 800 Camp-in 7:00 pm AA	29
30 10:00 am Worship	31			WV Weathervane 🎵 Choir rehearsals 7:00 pm		

January 2008

RVCC Calendar online - check for the latest updates at www.rvccme.org

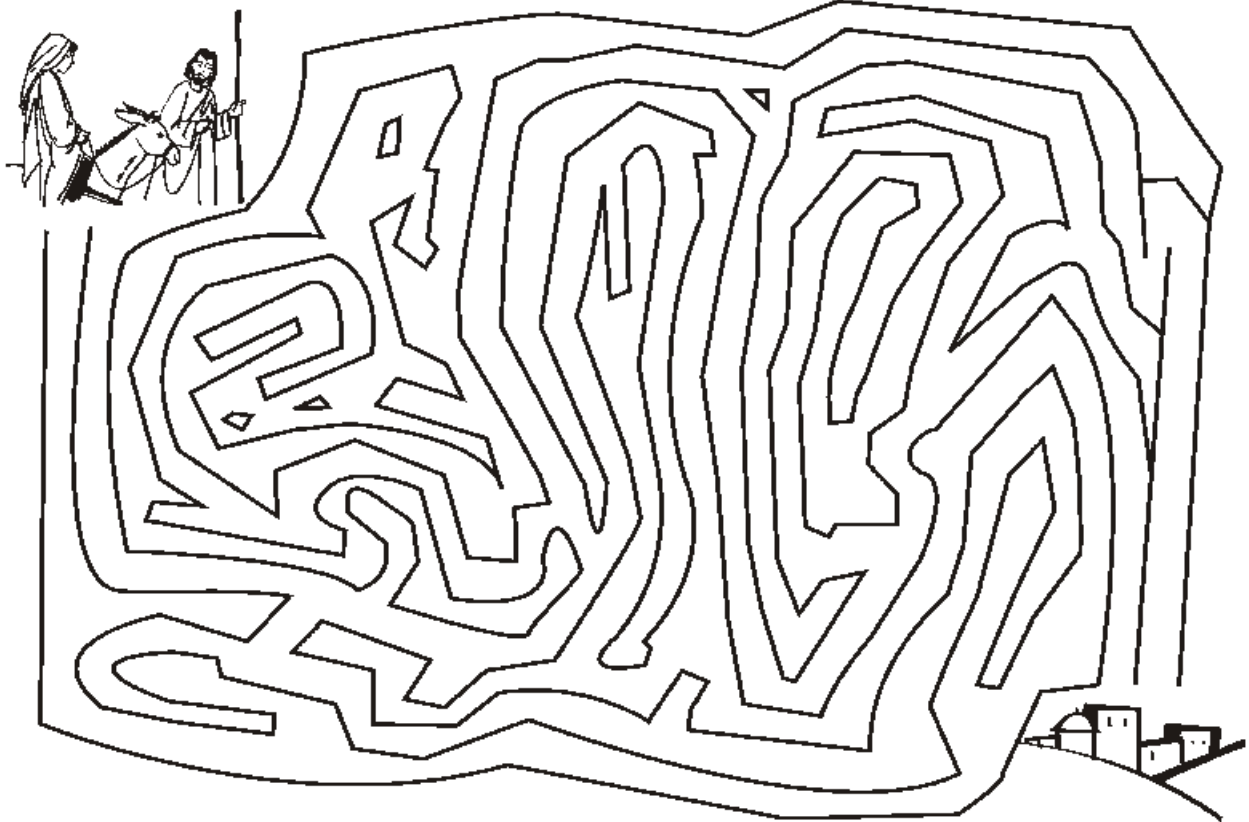
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WV Weathervane ♪ Choir rehearsals 7:00 pm		1 NEW YEARS DAY	2 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	3	4 7:00 pm AA	5 9:00 am Scout Pinewood Derby Workshop
6 10:00 am Worship Epiphany Celebration! 2:00 pm Scouting Achiever Awards	7 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting 6:30 pm Girl Scout Troop 2093 Meeting 7:00 pm BS Troop 800 Committee Meeting	8 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 ♪	9 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm - Deacons 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	10 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Church Council	11 7:00 pm AA	12 9:00 am Scout Pinewood Derby Workshop
13 10:00 am Worship	14 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	15 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 ♪	16 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	17	18 7:00 pm AA	19
WV articles due 10:00 am Worship 11:15 am RVCC Annual Meeting!	21 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting 6:30 pm Girl Scout Troop 2093 Meeting	22 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 ♪	23 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	24	25 7:00 pm AA	26
27 10:00 am Worship RVCC Annual Meeting Snow Date	28 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	29 6:30 pm BS Troop 800 ♪	30 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Pack 800 Den Meeting	31		

Kid's Korner

Or anyone who feels like a kid!

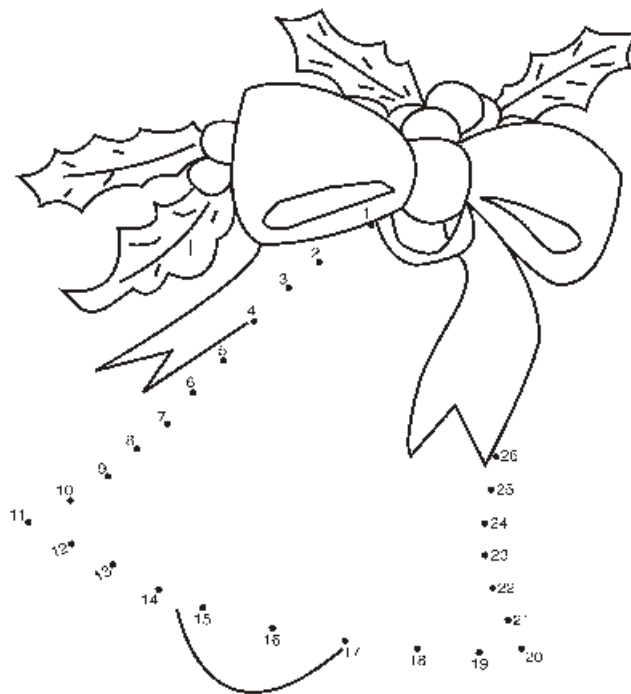
Finding Bethlehem

Can you help Joseph and Mary find the way to Bethlehem?



Christmas Dot to Dot

Connect the dots and color the picture.





This time of year is not always joyous for everyone. You might have had someone who died this past year or who died this time of year in the past. You might have someone away in the service or elsewhere and they can't get home for the holidays. What ever the reason we encourage you to attend our

HEALING SERVICE

on Tuesday, December 11 at 7:00 pm.

It will be a service that will hopefully give you a chance to let go and give your concerns over to God. Please bring a small stone with you. If you forget don't worry. We will have some there.

**Please come and join us at
Worship and bring a friend!!!**

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Next Newsletter Deadline:
January 20, 2007