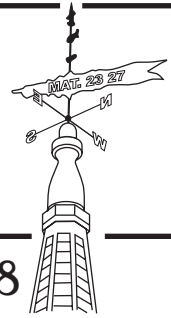


# The Weathervane

RAYMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH, United Church of Christ Newsletter



December 2008



## Table of Contents Page

Get ready for the Annual Meeting! . . . .	1
From the Pastor . . . . .	1
Prayer Concerns . . . . .	2
Scripture Readings for December . . . .	2
Annual Meeting Warrant . . . . .	3
Coordinating Council Meeting . . . . .	4
Advent Waiting With Hope . . . . .	6
Enjoy Your Hot Chocolate . . . . .	6
Old-Timey VARIETY SHOW! . . . . .	6
Getting to Know Your Volunteers . . . .	7
Touched by the Spirit . . . . .	7
Celebrate Advent with Your Church Family! . . . . .	7
From the Deacons Table . . . . .	8
HO...HO....HO . . . . .	8
Holiday Fair . . . . .	8
Ways to Introduce Your Friends to RVCC . . . . .	8
Advice for Advent . . . . .	8
Mission News . . . . .	9
College Corner . . . . .	9
History of the Advent Wreath . . . . .	9
Flower Donations . . . . .	9
Poinsettias for Christmas! . . . . .	10
Joyful Journeys with Jesus . . . . .	10
How We Care for One Another . . . . .	10
Stewardship... It's Not All About the Money . . . . .	10
Come to the Fellowship Café! . . . . .	10
Heartfelt Thanks! . . . . .	10
Update on Fair Trade Coffee . . . . .	10
Theater News . . . . .	11
Hanging of the Greens . . . . .	11
Christmas superstitions . . . . .	11
Kids Korner . . . . .	12
December Calendar . . . . .	13

## Get ready for the Annual Meeting!

Mark your calendars for January 18th (snow date of January 25) for our annual meeting and Pot Luck Lunch.

Our annual meeting is the time to review past year events while looking forward to our new year and what we have planned and get your inputs. We will be reviewing and approving a budget, electing our council and deacons and hearing reports from various



committees. All this intermixed with fun and food! What more could you ask for on a winter afternoon? We even supply child care!

As has been our custom, we will begin the meeting right after service in the sanctuary for the budget and officer elections. After that we will move to vestry to eat and hear reports and continue ongoing discussions regarding current and upcoming events at the church.

This is a good time to celebrate what, who and where we are as a church and community, your inputs help keep us on track. If you have a topic you want covered and are not sure we will be discussing it, drop us a line and let us know and we will add it to the agenda if it is not already there.

**We look forward to seeing you there!**

## The Year of the Gingerbread House



It was a two evening class, and I sat early with five other women, all of us intent on listening to and watching the instructor demonstrate how to get the walls of a gingerbread house constructed and the roof attached properly. Our assignment was to bring back a completed house, which we would decorate in class. Children were invited to help.

I arrived the following week with my three children, aged 8, 6, and 3, a house with lopsided walls, a few gaps in the frosting, a roof that almost fit, and three shopping bags overflowing with candy. My classmates soon arrived with their houses, every wall and doorway plumb, not a drop of extraneous frosting, only the best of confections and not a child in sight. Clearly their creations were meant to be the centerpiece of Christmas in their respective homes.

*continued on page 2*

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!

*continued from Page 1*

We set up at a table set apart from the others. It was only moments before bags of candy canes, cinnamon drops, and licorice sticks were ripped open and four pairs of hands with four distinct decorating plans were hard at work. Frosting was everywhere, and candy was consumed at a lightning pace. It was not long after that I looked at my older son, now white as a sheet, who announced that his stomach did not feel very well.

We made a beeline for the bathroom, made it to the waste basket in the hallway, and then a quick five minute trip home to bed. I left instructions with my daughter, the oldest child to keep an eye on her 3 year old brother, and finish up the house. I returned later to find two delighted and proud children, hands covered with frosting, lips red with peppermint, faces dusted with powdered and a gingerbread house completely covered with candy.

It was not the most beautiful house in the class – and it certainly was not perfect. But it reflected joy and family and warmth and working together. It will always remind me that, at its root, Christmas is not about perfection and a Martha Stewart table. It is about who you celebrate with and just how much you love them.

It is about the very first Christmas in Bethlehem long ago. Certainly the stable was pretty ordinary accommodations, and the shepherds would not have been high on anybody's guest list. It was hardly the perfect beginning for anyone, let alone the Savior of the world. But then, again, Christmas is not about perfection and the baby's name was Emmanuel, which means "God with us" and when you come right down to it, it is really all about love.

**PRAYER CONCERNS**

Our prayers of concern go out to:

**Those in our Church Family**

Jane Jordan, Line MacDonald, Ginny Parker, Al and Charlotte Rowe.

**In our Extended Family**

Sue Barter, Annette Jordan, Doug Lambert, Paula Legg, Hal Maker, Dan Sullivan, Ralph (Skip) Willis, and Jim Yeager.

**In our Community**

Carlene Banks, Carol Blake, Dora and Bobby Durgin, Frances and Hazel Hinds, Lori Lockwood, Dick Morris, Dana Reed, Sandy Salmonson, Connie Turner, all of our service men and women, and all others near and far who are sick or in need.

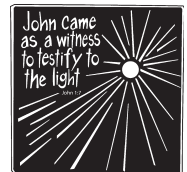
**Sunday's Scripture**

Here are the readings that you will be hearing in church during December and January. Take a moment to read and reflect upon them ahead of time. They may have more meaning for you when they are read aloud on Sunday.



December 7th – The Advent Sunday of Peace and Hanging of the Greens  
 Isaiah 40:1-11  
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
 2 Peter 3:8-15  
 Mark 1:1-8

December 14th – The Advent Sunday of Joy and the Annual Youth Christmas Program  
 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
 Psalm 126  
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
 John 1:6-8, 19-28



December 21st – The Advent Sunday of Love and Christmas Sunday  
 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26  
 Romans 16:25-27  
 Luke 1:26-38



December 28th – First Sunday after Christmas  
 Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
 Psalm 148  
 Galatians 4:4-7  
 Luke 2:22-40

January 4th – Second Sunday after Christmas and Epiphany Sunday  
 Jeremiah 31:7-14  
 Psalm 147:12-20  
 Ephesians 1:3-14  
 John 1:1-9, 10-18

January 11th – The Baptism of Christ  
 Genesis 1:1-5  
 Psalm 29  
 Acts 19:1-7  
 Mark 1:4-11

January 18th – Second Sunday after Epiphany and the RVCC Annual Meeting  
 1 Samuel 3:1-10  
 Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18  
 1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
 John 1:43-51

January 25th – Third Sunday after Epiphany  
 Jonah 3:1-5, 10  
 Psalm 62:5-12  
 1 Corinthians 7:29-31  
 Mark 1:14-20

*Raymond Village Community Church, UCC*

**Warrant for Annual Congregational Meeting**

January 18, 2009

Notice is hereby given to the members of the Raymond Village Community Church, UCC in Raymond, Maine that you are duly called to meet at our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 18, 2009. The meeting will begin in the Sanctuary following the Worship Service starting approximately 11:15 AM. The meeting will be held on January 25, 2009 at the same time and location if inclement weather causes the meeting to be postponed.

The business of the meeting shall be as follows:

Article 1: To hear and act upon the reports of all officers, Coordinators, Task Force, and Committees;

Article 2: To adopt a budget for the fiscal year 2009;

Article 3: To elect a slate of officers to serve for the year;

Article 4: To transact any other business that shall lawfully come before this meeting.

Notice of this meeting is hereby given on this the 4<sup>th</sup> (and 11<sup>th</sup>) day of January, 2009.

Respectfully,

Lori B. Lambert,

Church Clerk

**An Advent Prayer**

Holy Spirit  
Breath of Love  
Burning flame, divine  
Light the creche  
Where rests the Hope  
Of all human kind.  
(by Rita Ledwith)



**Christ is born in Bethlehem**

## Summary of November 13, 2008 Coordinating Council Meeting

The meeting was called to order on Thursday November 13th.

Present were: Brian, Caryl, Dick, Lori, Fran, Nancy F. and Rolf

Absent: Nancy Y.,

Caryl offered the opening prayer to begin our meeting.

Minutes from our October 9th Council Meeting were unanimously approved, as amended.

**Pastoral Reflection:** Nancy's reflection this month was designed to help us take a step back from all the distractions that can keep us from focusing on God and the coming Advent. She read three poems from "Kneeling in Bethlehem" by Ann Weems. The three poems are included below so that you can also reflect upon the coming of Advent.

### The Coming of God

Our God is the One who comes to us in a burning bush, in an angel song, in a newborn child.

Our God is the One who cannot be found locked in a church, not even in the sanctuary.

Our God will be where God will be with no constraints, no predictability.

Our God lives where our God lives, and destruction has no power and even death cannot stop the living.

Our God will be born where God will be born, but there is no place to look for the One who comes to us.

When God is ready God will come even to a godforsaken place like a stable in Bethlehem.

Watch... for you know not when God comes.

Watch, that you might be found whenever, wherever God comes.

### This Year

I wonder if God comes to the edge of heaven each Advent and flings the Star into the December sky,

Laughing with joy as it lights the darkness of the earth; and the angels, hearing the laughter of God,

begin to congregate in some celestial chamber to practice their alleluias.

I wonder if there's some ordering of rank among the angels as they move into procession,

The seraphim bumping the cherubim from top spot, the new inhabitants of heaven standing in the back

until they get the hang of it.

(After all, treading air over a stable and announcing at the same time can't be all that easy!)

Or is everybody that is, every "soul" free to fly wherever the spirit moves?

Or do they even think about it?

Perhaps when God calls, perhaps they just come, this multitude of heavenly hosts.

Perhaps they come, winging through the winds of time full of expectancy, full of hope, that this year,

perhaps this year (perhaps) the earth will fall to its knees in a whisper of "Peace."

### We Seem to Forget

What concerns me, what lies on my heart, is this:

That we in the church papered and programmed, articulate and agenda-ed, are telling the faith story all wrong,

are telling it as though it happened two thousand years ago or is going to happen as soon as the church budget is raised.

We seem to forget that Christ's name is Emmanuel, God with Us,

Not just when he sat among us but now, when we cannot feel the nailprints in his hands.

### **Budget Discussion**

Caryl gave us a proposed budget which each committee coordinator reviewed for details in their own area. We discussed any line items that required changes for additional funds and any needed corrections. Caryl will take the information and update the proposed budget for further discussion at the next council meeting.

### **Winter Energy Issues**

Efficiency Maine and Maine Interfaith Power and Light presented a half day, intensive workshop on Saturday October 25th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at St. Paul's Church in Brunswick. Brian, Nancy and Joe attended.

The purpose was to learn how faith communities can help themselves and others survive soaring energy costs, as well as discussions about the linkage of churches to the preservation of God's creation, and tangible ways to reduce energy consumption. Many areas were discussed including the replacing incandescent lighting with compact fluorescent lighting

*continued on page 5*

*continued from Page 4*

(CFL), utilization of programmable thermostats and occupancy sensors, fans to effectively direct warm air, and heating systems optimization. RVCC is on the list for an Efficiency Maine energy audit in late November to help identify specific opportunities to save energy costs while helping the environment.

### Reports of the Coordinators

#### Treasurer (Caryl)

Caryl had placed the current statements in the council's office mailboxes. We reviewed that statements and Caryl answered questions that were raised. After a motion and second the Council accepted the Treasurer's report as given, subject to audit.

#### Church Clerk (Lori)

Five new members will join RVCC this Sunday. They are: Bill Dreyer, Jeri Keane, Bob Metz, Gloria Metz and Judy Munson.

#### Trustee (Dick)

Weather-stripping has been added to the doors of the vestry and sanctuary, and the windows are caulked.

Some damage was done to our gutter and downspout which Dick and Bob Dunklee repaired.

A donation from the Semi-circle will be used for a new counter in the kitchen. The plan is for the work to be done by Christmas.

The fall clean up is scheduled for this Sunday November 16th, right after church. We have asked folks to wear jeans or old work clothes that day and plan to lend a hand beautifying and preparing RVCC for the winter season!

#### Missions Committee (Brian)

Winterization Projects: The Appalachia Mission team has begun to identify families who may benefit from help winterizing their homes for winter. They will be doing work in these homes over the next couple of months.

Thanksgiving Baskets: We will join again this year with the Raymond Food Pantry and Christ Chapel to deliver Thanksgiving food baskets throughout the community. Leigh Walker and Andy Morrison are spearheading this effort. A list of needed items has already been published in the Weathervane, and donations are accumulating in the vestry. Coordinating with the worship theme on November 23rd, other fresh food items will be collected as a cornucopia is made.

The Mitten Tree: Beverly Smith-Petersen will lead our

mitten tree mission this year. Gifts will be given to a family needing a bit of extra help this year. More information to follow as this develops. Watch for the "Mitten Tree" to arrive in the vestry, then just take a mitten, purchase the gift suggested, and return it under the tree wrapped and with the mitten attached. It's that simple to give the gift of love this Christmas!

Winter Heating Relief: Brian discussed with the Council the anticipated increased demand for Winter relief support. The Council agreed that, if needed, some of our allocated "rainy day" Mission resources could and should be used to help support those in need in our community.

#### Christian Ed Committee (Rev. Nancy)

Nothing new to report this month.

#### Stewardship: (Lori)

The theme of this years Stewardship Campaign organized by Walt Read has been "The World of the Generous Giver Gets Larger and Larger" Stewardship letters, with commitment cards were mailed out and Commitment Sunday was November 2nd. After receiving any further commitment cards which may come in this Sunday, a follow up letter will be sent to those who have not yet responded.

At this time we have no Stewardship Coordinator. This position is vital to the council, so **please**, if your talents may lie in this area we'd love to have you onboard.

#### Deacons (Fran)

New member Sunday will be November 16th.

The deacons will ask the trustees to check the sanctuary door which has been hard to open since the weather-stripping was done.

November 23rd is Thanksgiving Sunday and we will again have a cornucopia filled with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Advent begins on Sunday November 30th and we will once again ask families to share in the lighting of the Advent candles each Sunday. There will be an Advent Vespers service on Thursday, December 4th, at 7:00. The two Christmas Eve services one at 4:30 the other at 11:00 will both be candlelight services.

#### Moderator (Rolf)

Business has been covered in other reports.

*continued on page 6*

*continued from page 5*

**Pastor** (Rev. Nancy)

Business has been covered in other reports.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

The council was reminded that, like last year, there will be no January Weathervane, so information on events running into early February will need to be in the December issue.

We're asking for more care in throwing our cups that may still contain coffee, tea or juice. Tossing cups with liquid remaining into the trash makes it more difficult for Frank to re-use the bags which could help to lower waste and our costs. Please empty your cup into the sink before throwing it out. The trustees will send a short note about this in for the next Weathervane.

The next Council meeting will be Thursday December 11, 2008; at 7:00 p.m. Prayer will be offered by Lori.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Lambert, Church Clerk

## **Advent... Waiting With Hope**

(from [http:// i.ucc.org](http://i.ucc.org))

Advent (from Latin, *adventus*, meaning "coming towards") is a four-week season of preparation for Christmas. The First Sunday of Advent (November 30) marks the beginning of the church's year.

Advent and Christmas focus both on the past the coming of Jesus as an infant born into poverty in Bethlehem, and the future the coming of Christ in glory to fulfill God's loving purposes for humanity. This past and future orientation is reflected in the readings appointed in the church for each Sunday of Advent.

Advent this year comes at a time of anxiety and hope. Many of us are struggling and are afraid for our future. It's not easy to hope when times are bad. Mary, as she waited for the birth of her child into an uncertain world, knew how to live with hope to believe the promises of God. So Advent is a time when we wait, with Mary, for the birth of new life into a world living in shadows.

The traditional color of Advent is purple, so you will see a purple altar cloth in church, and Rev. Nancy will be wearing a purple stole.

## **Enjoy Your Hot Chocolate**

A group of graduates, well established in their careers, were talking at a reunion and decided to go visit their old university professor, now retired. During their visit, the conversation turned to complaints about stress in their work and lives. Offering his guests hot chocolate, the professor went into the kitchen and returned with a large pot of hot chocolate and an assortment of cups - porcelain, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the hot chocolate.

When they all had a cup of hot chocolate in hand, the professor said: 'Notice that all the nice looking; expensive cups were taken, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. The cup that you're drinking from adds nothing to the quality of the hot chocolate. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was hot chocolate, not the cup; but you consciously went for the best cups... And then you began eyeing each other's cups.

Now consider this: Life is the hot chocolate; your job, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life. The cup you have does not define, nor change the quality of life you have. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the hot chocolate God has provided us.

God makes the hot chocolate, man chooses the cups. The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything that they have.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. And enjoy your hot chocolate in 2009!

## **Come one, come all... to the 2009 RVCC Old-Timey VARIETY SHOW!**

Better than American Idol! We (you and me) are the entertainment for the Calendar Dinner in March. Do you sing? Do you dance? Do you have a funny story to tell? Do you have a favorite poem you'd care to recite? If so, join "Brian and the Bad Boys", "The Sisters of the Traveling Hammer", and others who will be strutting their stuff and entertaining us after dinner that night. Hurry! Space is limited, and we want to include as many acts as possible. Talent definitely optional! Contact Joe Foran, Variety Show Impresario, and tell him about the amazing act you want to add to the show: 207-829-6351, [jforan1@maine.rr.com](mailto:jforan1@maine.rr.com).

## Getting to Know Your Volunteers

Sit in on a Council meeting of RVCC, and get the sensation and assurance of having a strong leader, who cares where we are going and steers us till we get there. The experienced talents of **Rolf Olsen**, and devotion to his cause are evident to each of us as he opens each meeting, giving us something else to thank God for. I learned a lot more about his expertise and caring in reading his answers to our questionnaire. Read on....

### What is your favorite part of doing your volunteer activity?

The best part is seeing plans and ideas come together. We have many different talents in our church and with that many different needs. With the genuine care and concern by all, we get things done; not only for the people in our church but for both the near and far community.

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

I was nominated for the Moderator position at the annual meeting some years ago by Jane Jordan. At that time she was on the Town of Raymond Budget Committee that I was Chairman of and I guess she thought I could handle this as well. As I worked with the council I found out how much each of the members cared for all and in making our church something special for us all. It has always been my philosophy that if you want something to be successful, you should be willing to give of your self also. I feel the church in the community is an anchor and we need to keep it strong and vibrant. This does not happen by itself, but only by all of us helping however we can. We have all seen how we pull together in times of both good and bad; there is always the hand to help someone some how. Who does not get that warm feeling when they either think of the church or walk into the church! This is my way to help keep this feeling going.

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

The biggest thing I have learned is the level of care that exists in the church. We have a "can do" attitude, we make things happen in spite of our size. We make a difference in a time when many are content to walk with their heads down and fear getting involved, we step forward and take on challenges. People find ways to help and to make a difference in the lives of others. Much of what is done by members of the church is

"below the radar" but the people are not doing it for the recognition but because it should be done .... what better testament to the bedrock of the church. It makes me remember that the church is not a building but rather those that inhabit the building. This is what make us what we are.

### Touched by the Spirit

"God is in the prepositions  
beyond,  
among, within  
beneath."

(Sharon Daloz Parks)

## Celebrate Advent with Your Church Family!

### Sunday, November 30th – First Sunday in Advent

10:00 A.M. – Worship with lighting of the Advent wreath. Children will receive a special Advent calendar.

### Thursday, December 4th – Candlelight Advent Vespers Service

7:00 P.M. – a quiet and contemplative worship service to remind us of the real meaning of the Advent season.

### December 6th – Annual Christmas Fair

Come and help with the fair, enjoy a delicious fair luncheon, and do your Christmas shopping!

### December 7th – Second Sunday in Advent

10:00 A.M. – Family Sunday Worship with the Hanging of the Greens and Lighting of the Advent wreath.

11:15 A.M. – All-Church Advent Potluck Brunch with carols led by one of our Youth Singers.

### December 14th – Third Sunday in Advent

10:00 A.M. – Worship with communion and lighting of the Advent wreath and especially featuring the Annual Youth Christmas Program.

11:15 A.M. – Birthday Party for Jesus coffee hour with gifts for the children.

### December 22nd – Fourth Sunday in Advent

10:00 A.M. – Family Sunday worship with the lighting of the Advent wreath and special Christmas music by our Adult and Very Occasional Men's Choirs.

### December 24th – Christmas Eve

4:30 P.M. – Family candlelight worship service.  
11:00 P.M. – Candlelight Communion Service.

## From the Deacon's Table

The holiday season is in full swing. New members have been welcomed into the family, and an All Saints observance was held, with Rev. Nancy reading the list of those being remembered.

The Thanksgiving cornucopia and food baskets were filled and dispersed; a joyful Christmas fair, led by Jeri Keane, carried us into the Advent season when all the fabulous colors, music, and festivities made their appearances in proper order. The deacons, dressing our sanctuary for the Advent season, with the fresh holly and ivy, and our traditionally expected decorations and ceremonies, prepared their parts in the special worship services leading up to Christmas itself.

A candlelight vespers service on December 4, followed by hanging of the greens, potluck Brunch, and Caroling on December 7, were planned, and were followed by the Christmas pageant on December 14 with communion, Christmas Sunday on December 21, and the two special Christmas eve services at 4:30 and 11 P.M. The deacon's monthly meeting for December was held on December 10 at the home of Linda Eldridge, deacon coordinator, with a special dinner celebration and meeting following.

As always, the Christmas Spirit was very evident, and all concerned pitched in and made the season a bright one. Advent candles were lit by our families each Sunday of the season, and by all during the candlelit services and special music of Christmas Eve.

As we turn the corner into the year 2009, let us pray that the Christmas Spirit will carry us happily into a new beginning, with brand new ideas and activities binding us together into a holy and glorious unity as we welcome the love of God that warms our church and our hearts.

Gratefully and prayerfully, Frances Mains

## HO...HO....HO

RVCC will continue our mission effort to provide **HO**pe during the **HO**lidays and beyond. **HO**w? In January we will begin our annual Heifer Project. This is a family event designed to involve all of us in understanding issues of world hunger. We will combine our financial resources to send gifts of livestock to help families grow and thrive. On Sunday Jan. 11th, we'll distribute calendars and collection banks and invite everyone to join in the project to help end world hunger.

# Holiday Fair

**Saturday, Dec. 6**

**8 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**at**

**Raymond Village**

**Community Church**

**27 Main Street, Raymond**

***Wreaths ~ Crafts ~ Knit & Crocheted  
Items ~ Maple Syrup***

***Woodworking ~ Jewelry Baked Goods ~  
Children's Room ~ Cookie Walk ~  
Cheddar Cheese Wheel ~ Silent Auction  
Lap Quilt Raffle ~ SERRV***

**Breakfast & Lunch Served**

## Ways to Introduce Your Friends to RVCC

Families near you may be looking for a church to attend around Christmas time or as a way to start off the New Year. Why not invite them to experience worship and fellowship at RVCC? We have some "good things" going on around here:

1. Advent Candlelight Vespers Service December 4th
2. Christmas Fair December 6th
3. Hanging of the Greens and All-Church Advent Potluck Brunch December 7th
4. Annual Youth Christmas Program and Worship December 14th
5. Christmas Sunday Worship with the Adult and the Very Occasional Men's Choir December 21st
6. Christmas Eve Worship at 4:30 P.M. and 11:00 P.M.

## Advice for Advent

"Do not ask a child to tell you what is a miracle; he may turn and ask you what in all the world you think is not." (James Freeman)

## 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. Your generosity will help you receive the gift of the true meaning of Christmas.

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 and the Raymond Elementary School, led by 2nd grade teacher Mrs. Tarr, we were able to provide a basket for everyone who expressed a need. Thank you to everyone who supported this effort from the donation of food items to helping manage the packing and distribution. Your efforts provided a blessed Thanksgiving for many people living in our area.

As the weather grows colder, the demand on the Raymond Food Pantry increases. 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) and personal care items (toothpaste, shampoo, soap, etc.). You can drop off your donations on the vestry Mission table and we will consolidate them and bring them to the Food Pantry.

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 2008 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! We are thankful to have the Stevensons again leading this Mission outreach effort. More information on the Heifer Project can be found in a separate article in this month's Weathervane.

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

## College Corner

### Kaleigh Lambert

Hi Everybody,

I'm counting the days until I board my flight on December 13th. Until then, I've got a really packed schedule. My thanksgiving plans have changed, from going to one of my professor's house, to cooking Thanksgiving dinner for several friends, but I'm really looking forward to the whole day. I'm already preparing for finals as they will be here before you know it! Mostly, I just really want to thank everyone who gave items to the care packages. It's always so nice to be remembered, and the goodies are fun to share with my roommates. A very special thank you to Kathleen Bent for organizing, packing and mailing the boxes out to all of us. I really appreciate all the work and especially the love that goes into a gift like this. Thanks so much, and see you soon!

Sending love to you all from Juneau,

Kaleigh

## History of the Advent Wreath

From ancient times, one way to celebrate Advent is by lighting candles on an Advent wreath. The wreath was widely used in northern Europe long before Christianity as a symbol of life and hope. Made of evergreens, it symbolized the circle of the year that would turn from winter to spring, from shadows to light. During the Middle Ages, Christians adopted this symbol and reinterpreted its meaning: the lighted candles symbolized the light of Christ shining in the night, and the evergreens represented the new life that Christ brings into the world.

The four candles on the wreath correspond to the four Sundays in Advent. The Christ Candle is lit Christmas Eve. Three of the candles are purple symbolizing the sovereignty of Christ. One candle is pink or rose symbolizing the light of early dawn. The Christ candle is white symbolizing daylight and celebration.

(from [http:// i.ucc.org](http://i.ucc.org))

## Flower Donations

Thanks to all who donated lovely autumn flowers this fall for our altar:

Vicki Gordan – in honor of Charlie Tripp's birthday.

Carl and Christine Plummer – in honor of Ryan and Amber Woodman's Birthday.

Nancy Yates – In honor of her brother, Ron, and her sister, Davina.

## Poinsettias for Christmas!

Poinsettias are such a lovely reminder of the joy of the Christmas season. Please bring one or more (preferably red in 6 inch pots for our poinsettia tree) to help decorate our sanctuary during Advent. You may pick up a Donation Form on the table at the back of the sanctuary if you would like to give your poinsettia in honor or memory of someone special. These names will be published in the bulletin on Christmas Sunday (December 21st) and on Christmas Eve.

Drop your poinsettia off at the Church Office any Thursday morning or bring it to worship on Sunday, December 7th, 14th, or 21st.

---

## Joyful Journeys with Jesus

Our Sunday School for children in grades 1-6 will be starting a new theme in January "New Beginnings." For the next three months, they will be learning about forgiveness and mercy and how those values can change the old and worn parts of their lives into new beginnings. All of their lessons will be interactive and action-packed and will use videos, cooking, and crafts. There will be a new song to learn each month as well as a Bible verse and prayer. The month of January will focus on the Story of the Prodigal Son.

---

## How We Care for One Another

Here are some ways to let those around you know that you really care about them:

1. Be careful with how you use words. We can hurt people's feelings so easily with poorly chosen phrases.
2. Take time to listen.
3. Be interested in the whole of life of everyone ask questions about how other parts of life are going.
4. Attend to the little signs of extra stress such as anxiety, a "short fuse," withdrawal, or absences.
5. Remember significant dates such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduation.
6. Write a note of support when challenges are looming or of affirmation when success can be celebrated.
7. Support people's special endeavors and let people know that if it matters to them, it matters to you.

*(by Sharrone Price for Seasons of the Spirit)*

## Stewardship... It's Not All About the Money

Faithful stewardship has a variety of faces. In general, it means looking out for the many gifts God has given us. One of those gifts, of course, is our earth and one way to watch over our earth is by conserving our resources not only for ourselves but for our children and grandchildren as well.

Of course, conserving our resources also makes us more efficient in how we use them both at home and at church. Let's use our church building as an example. Here are some things you can do to be good faithful and efficient stewards around RVCC! Remember to turn out the lights when you leave the Vestry or one of the classrooms. Remember to turn down the thermostat when you leave. Remember to close outside doors behind you.

---

## Come to the Fellowship Café!

Join your church family for coffee and conversation every Sunday morning before worship beginning at 9:30 A.M. in the Vestry. This is where we socialize before we worship! **When you choose to come into the sanctuary, please do so quietly and respect others who are preparing for worship.**

Thanks to the CE Task Force and the Sunday School for hosting the Café in November. The Very Occasional Men's Choir is the host in December.

---

## Heartfelt Thanks!

Special thanks to the crew of "Neighbors Helping Neighbors". My house has been warmer since they did some winterization projects here. Also, a special thank you to Bernie Dodge for a little job he did in the kitchen at my request, which had been a big worry to me. What a wonderful group of caring workers we have in "Neighbors Helping Neighbors". Thank you so much!

Anne Harriman

---

## Update on Fair Trade Coffee

Not only is the Equal Exchange fair trade coffee that we sell in the Vestry and serve on Sundays organic, but Equal Exchange supports small-scale farmer practices such as terracing, water conservation, manual weeding, and crop diversification all of which lead to great soil fertility and reduce erosion. Buying fair trade coffee is a way for all of us to be good stewards of the earth. It's doing good by doing right!

## THEATRE NEWS

**Windham Chamber Singers**



### An American Family Holiday at the Windham Performing Arts Center - Windham High School

Saturday, December 6, 2008, at 2:00 and 7:30. Tickets on sale now, call 892-1810 ext. 275 for more information.

RVCC Chamber Singers include Molly Keane-Dreyer, Rebecca Morris and Georgia Noonan!

### **Hanging of the Greens**

A common Advent tradition in the northern hemisphere is known as the Hanging of the Greens. This is an intriguing blend of ancient symbolisms adapted over the years to proclaim a variety of powerful messages.

Ancient Romans used evergreens as symbols of peace, joy, and victory. Their long-lasting color and inherent strength suggested long life and exuberance. Early Christians saw in these same branches a symbol of the risen Christ, and would place evergreen boughs in their windows to symbolize that Christ was present in their home. However, some early Christian leaders condemned the practice, believing that it was too similar to Roman imperial customs.

The peoples of Northern Europe had many customs connected with evergreens in the wintertime before Christianity arrived there. In a land of long, cold winters, there was a fear that the sun would disappear and never return. Believing that evergreens held magical powers, people brought them indoors hoping they would help bring back the sun. Over time, the evergreens came to symbolize the presence of new life of Christ, whose birth was celebrated in the northern winter.

Holly became closely tied to Christmas and Christian symbolism. Some people saw it as a symbolic "burning bush" arriving at the time of year when we celebrated the birth of Jesus, the "new Moses." Others saw it as a symbol of Mary whose being glowed with the presence of the Holy Spirit symbolized by the color red. Still others saw its prickly leaves and red berries as symbols of the crown of thorns and drops of blood. Lest we get carried away in a story of pure joy, the holly tree

reminds us of a larger picture.

Cedar in many cultures is a symbol of royalty, and the sweet smell of pine and other evergreens is a reminder of the frankincense brought by the magi.

As churches, homes, and other places get adorned with greenery during Advent and Christmas, look beyond the decorations to the powerful symbolism that can take us ever deeper into the story and mystery that is the birth of Jesus Christ in our world.

### **Some Christmas superstitions:**

- If you refuse a mince pie at Christmas dinner you will have bad luck for the coming day.
- If you eat a raw egg before eating anything else on Christmas morning, you will be able to carry heavy weights.
- A clear star-filled sky on Christmas Eve will bring good crops in the summer.
- A blowing wind on Christmas Day brings good luck.
- In Devonshire, England, a girl raps at the henhouse door on Christmas Eve. If a rooster crows, she will marry within the year.
- Snow on Christmas means Easter will be green.

### **Superstitions having to do with shoes:**

- Wearing new shoes on Christmas Day will bring bad luck.
- Place shoes side by side on Christmas Eve to prevent a quarreling family.
- In Greece, some people burn their old shoes during the Christmas season to prevent misfortunes in the coming year.

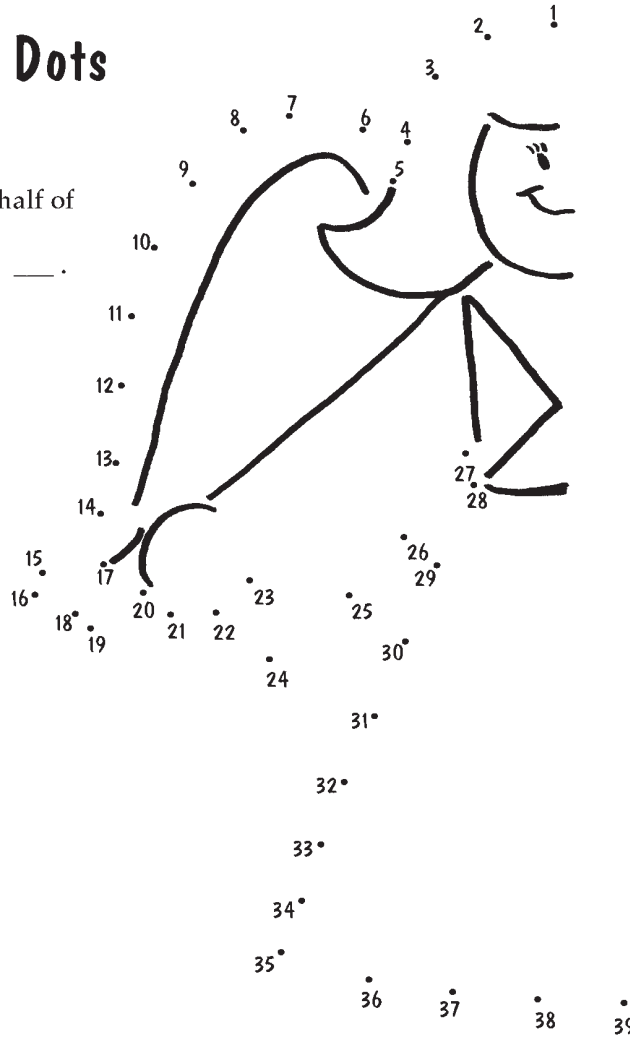
# Kid's Korner

Or anyone who feels like a kid!

## Connect the Dots

Connect the dots.

Then draw the other half of  
this \_\_\_\_\_.



## Angels


Here are some Bible verses that tell us some things that angels have done and can do for us. Can you match the verse and action?

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Heb 1:14     | a. gave directions to Peter                                 |
| 2. Luke 1:11-20 | b. rolled back the stone                                    |
| 3. Acts 12:7-10 | c. gave instruction to Philip                               |
| 4. Mat 2:13     | d. spirits in divine service                                |
| 5. Luke 22:43   | e. appeared as strangers to whom we should show hospitality |
| 6. Mat 28:2     | f. brought good news to Zechariah                           |
| 7. Acts 8:26    | g. appeared to Jesus and gave him strength                  |
| 8. Heb 13:2     | h. guard us and bear us up                                  |
| 9. Ps 91:11-12  | i. appeared to Joseph in a dream                            |

Answers:  
1.d 4.i 7.c  
2.f 5.e 8.c  
3.a 6.b 9.h

# December 2008

RVCC Calendar online - check for the latest updates at [www.rvccme.org](http://www.rvccme.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Choir rehearsals 11:15 am</p>	1 7:00 pm Troop 800 Committee Meeting	2 6:30 pm B.S. Troop 800	3 6:30 am Men's Fellowship	4 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Church Council	5 Christmas Fair Set-up 7:00 pm Cub Parent Meeting 7:00 pm AA	6 9:00 am - 2:00 pm RVCC Christmas Fair!
7 10:00 am Worship	8 7:00 pm Troop 800 Committee Meeting	9 6:30 pm B.S. Troop 800	10 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 6:30 pm Deacons Meeting	11 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Church Council	12 7:00 pm AA	13 7:00 pm AA
14 10:00 am Worship <i>Christmas Pageant!</i>	15 7:00 pm Troop 800 Committee Meeting	16 6:30 pm B.S. Troop 800	17 6:30 am Men's Fellowship	18 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Church Council	19 7:00 pm AA	20 7:00 pm AA
21 10:00 am Worship	22 7:00 pm Troop 800 Committee Meeting	23 6:30 pm B.S. Troop 800	24 6:30 am Men's Fellowship 4:30 pm Family Candlelight Service! 11:00 pm Communion Candlelight Service	25 Church Office - closed  Christ is born in Bethlehem	26 7:00 pm AA	27 WaySide Soup Kitchen- Contact: Elaine York 892-5611 FMI
28 10:00 am Worship	29 7:00 pm Troop 800 Committee Meeting	30 6:30 pm B.S. Troop 800	31 6:30 am Men's Fellowship	January 1 Happy New Year! Church Office - closed	January 2 B.S. Troop 800 "CAMP IN" at RVCC 7:00 pm AA	January 3 7:00 pm AA
January 4 10:00 am Worship 2:00 pm 2008 Scout Achievement Awards	January 5 7:00 pm Troop 800 Committee Meeting	January 6 6:30 pm B.S. Troop 800	January 7 6:30 am Men's Fellowship	January 8 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Church Council	January 9 7:00 pm AA	January 10 Weathervane articles due January 20

**RAYMOND VILLAGE  
COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

**Sunday Morning  
Worship 10:00 AM**

Nursery Available and  
Handicap Accessible

Sunday School 10:00 AM

Rev. Nancy Foran, Pastor

Lori Lambert, Secretary

Donna Hurd, Organist  
and Choir Director

John Hanley,  
Weathervane  
Page Layout & Design

Frank Sullivan, Custodian



**Reminder: there will be  
no Weathervane for January**

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

Raymond Village Community Church  
United Church of Christ  
207-655-7749  
PO Box 285  
Raymond, ME 04071-0285  
office@rvccme.org

---

NON-PROFIT ORGAN  
U S POSTAGE PAID  
Raymond ME 04071

Permit #1

---

**Next Newsletter Deadline:  
January 20, 2009**