

Welcome to  
**Riverside**  
**Presbyterian Church**

December 24, 2023

Please silence your cell  
phones.

\* Please stand in body or Spirit.  
**Bold** indicates congregational  
response.



**WE GATHER TO PRAISE GOD**

PRELUDE

*Now Sing We Now Rejoice*

arr. Manz

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Across the universe creation waits for the prophets to speak their words  
of expectation and their vision of renewal.

May we gather round them today once more and let their longing grip us  
and lead us into birth and blessing.

So come now my friends this is the meeting place of promise and  
prophecy.

**Let us listen through the ancient words that we might be ready to hear  
a baby's cry.**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Joy to the world! Our God is now coming to bring us "good news."

May we sing songs of praise and gladness. We know that our Savior  
reigns. Let us light the Candle of Joy.

\*HYMN #82

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

\*CALL TO CONFESSION

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, still creating, we hear your promises of a new day of joy and peace, and we are skeptical. We expect things to go on the same as they always have, from bad to worse. The past will keep us guilty, the future will make us afraid, and the present will burden us with too little time and too much to do.

Forgive our lack of faith, our quickness to believe that you do not hear us, and our pessimism about tomorrow. Do a new thing in our hearts, and let us be glad and rejoice in your abundant care. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us.

**Amen.** (Silence is kept.)

\*SUNG RESPONSE (# 95) *Prepare the Way of the Lord*

**Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord,  
and all people will see the salvation of our God.**

\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Psalm 103:17)

“The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.”

Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

\*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*(Please greet those around you with a sign of Christ’s peace.)*

CHILDREN’S MOMENT

*The Friendly Beasts* (see insert)

Children K-5th are invited to River Kids at this time and will be brought to the social hall for fellowship after. Younger children may go to childcare.

## **WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

FIRST READING

Isaiah 65:17-25

OT p. 696

SERMON

"New Heavens and New Earth"

**OUR FAITHFUL RESPONSE**

\*HYMN #100

*My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

With joy and gratitude for all we have been given, let us offer our tithes and gifts to God.

THE OFFERING & OFFERTORY *And Mary Pondered* Dvorak/Stoneberg\*SUNG RESPONSE (#92) *While We Are Waiting, Come***While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.****Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION FOR OFFERING

Immanuel, God with us; In muscle and sinew, breath and bone.  
In vulnerability and risk, escape and refuge. In parable and healing,  
encounter and sign. In suffering and death, word became flesh.  
In resurrection, ascension, and spirit come down. In justice and grace,  
patience and peace. Immanuel, God with us, Use these gifts - these  
offerings - to put flesh on your work in the world. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SILENT PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

# GOD SENDS US INTO THE WORLD

\*HYMN                    *We Pray for Peace (Greensleeves)* (see insert)

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE                    *From Heaven Above*                    arr. Held

## WORSHIP NOTES

Call to Worship written by Roddy Hamilton. Prayer of Confession written by Dr. Tom Cheatham. Assurance of Pardon, Call for the Offering written by Teri McDowell Ott for The Presbyterian Outlook.

## PARTICIPANTS IN THE SERVICE

**Thank you** to Kate Zander for joining today's Ministry of Music.

**Greeter:** Connie Kelly

**Advent Wreath Lighters:** The Mack Family

**Liturgist:** Steven Teune

**Children's Moment:** Lynda Nadkarni

**Flowers** today are given in memory of our dad, Paul McCracken, with love from Paula McCracken and Linda Langer.

Flowers are also given from Nancy and Joe Dvorak "Celebrating parents! Our parents, our children as parents and honoring the most important job in the world: parenting."

**Fellowship:** is hosted by Lynda Nadkarni.

**Trustee of the Month:** Lynda Nadkarni

Elizabeth Musick, Donna Ulrich, John Lynch,  
Lloyd Bradbury, Jack Smith  
Healing for Dylan, fiancée of Kayla, childcare  
provider.





To sign up for the weekly emailed announcements, contact the church office, [rpsoffice@rpcusa.org](mailto:rpsoffice@rpcusa.org) or 708-447-1520

Dear RPC,

Happy Solstice! Thursday was the day of the year with the least daylight, and the first official day of winter. For those who don't like the cold or dark it may be a time of mourning, but keep in mind that the days start getting longer from here.

And that is the reason we celebrate Christ's birth around this time. God comes into the darkest, most difficult parts of our lives to give us a ray of hope. We are assured that even a tiny bit of faith will be enough to get us through—the faith of a child! And we can trust that the love and joy that Christ brings will continue to grow, along with the lengthening of days, until all is merry and bright and warm once again.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Mark

**CHRISTMAS EVE 4 PM WORSHIP** —This evening's service of Lessons and Carols features the acaBELLa Ringers, Ringers & Singers and Chancel Choir.

**NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP** — 10 am Carols and Cocoa — Join us for a time of singing Christmas Carols together. Here's a great opportunity to sing all your favorites. This casual service will not include a sermon or the choir. Come and help us make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

**RIVER KIDS** — This week's story is The Peaceable Kingdom. On December 31, kids will participate in the hymn sing. The new year kicks off with stories of Jesus' baptism, John the baptizer, and the Wedding at Cana. A teacher is desired for January 14 (John the Baptizer). Lynda provides a child-friendly version of the story, questions and a project. Let her know if you can lead the lesson!

**INTRODUCING THE GRACE SPACE** — Session endorsed and trustees acted to create a space in the sanctuary designed to be family-friendly. Whether for part of worship (childcare is still available) or all of worship, we hope children and their families will find this to be a space that enhances their growing in faith. Questions, suggestions and celebrations may be shared with Lynda Nadkarni.

**STREAMS OF LIVING WATER**—Will be on break until Sunday, January 7th when the focus will be on “Anglican & Methodist Spirituality”.

**THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING** is one of four church-wide special offerings of the PC (USA). It supports current and former church workers, their families, and offers education and leadership development at Presbyterian-related racial-ethnic colleges and other schools. Envelopes are at the back of the sanctuary and in the office. Please give as you are able.

**STEWARDSHIP 2024** —The 2024 Stewardship campaign is underway! Here’s how you can help. Pray daily for energy, enthusiasm, love. Pray for RPC to be a vital, thriving community of joy-filled servants of Jesus Christ.

Ask yourself - for what gifts in your life are you grateful to God? Where do you see Riverside Presbyterian Church partnering each day with God? What would you like to see our congregation do better or in addition to our current ministries?

When you have had time to reflect and pray, please make your 2024 Stewardship Pledge to Riverside Presbyterian Church. Pledge cards are available in the back of the church or church office or simply by connecting to [https://rpcusa.org/form\\_pledge](https://rpcusa.org/form_pledge). **Please return all cards by December 29.**

**PASTOR MARK AWAY**—Pastor Mark will be away December 25—January 1.

**OFFICE SCHEDULE** — December 26-28 the office will be staffed on an as-needed basis. Please call before coming in.

**SAVE THE DATE** — Taco Dinner to support Refugee Resettlement, Saturday, February 3, 4:00—7:00 pm.

**VOLUNTEER TREASURER and PAID BOOKKEEPER WANTED** — Contact Pastor Mark if you are interested or have any leads in either or both of these essential jobs. The bookkeeper position is 7 hours per week. Copies of the job descriptions are in the rack outside the church office.

Bookkeeper Job Description: <https://bit.ly/3R1xNPh>

Treasurer Job Description: <https://bit.ly/3v3vQUY>

**LITTLE FOOD PANTRY** — The item of the month is **canned fruit!** Any variety. Consider buying a case of 12!

**MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR RANDY WOMACK** — There will be a memorial service for Randy on January 4 at 11 am at Woodlawn Funeral Home, 7750 W. Cermak Rd., Forest Park.

**CHURCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING DAY: Saturday, January 6th, 9am-12pm.** All members are welcome and encouraged to join in this class on congregational studies led by Pastor Mark. We will consider where RPC has been, where we are, and where we may be headed. A mixture of presentation and discussion will allow for a wide range of reflection, but we will not be making any decisions or concrete plans at the training. Please RSVP via the office. If it is a small group, we may go out for brunch!

**REFUGEE FAMILY UPDATE** — The youngest two children, Gama and Khadidja were very excited to start school this week! Armstrong School has a very large refugee population and their teaching staff is really good at helping students feel welcomed and confident in their learning.



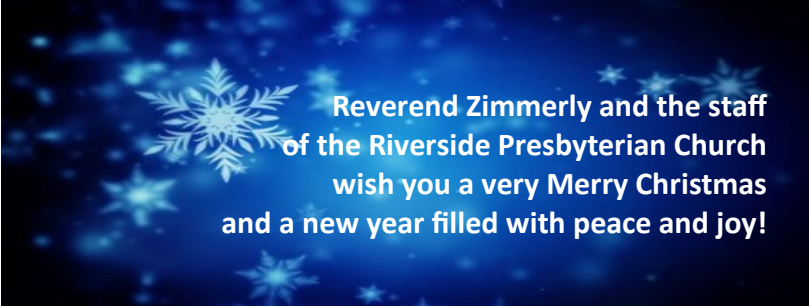
**MESSIAH** — Alleluia! Thank you God for giving us such an outstanding group of volunteers at Riverside Presbyterian Church, who are always there to help, spread joy and happiness. The support that we were so blessed with is so heart-warming during this Christmas season. Thank you everyone for a successful Handel's Messiah and Wassail Bowl Reception evening.

—Deb and Jon Jansky

**SUNDAYS WITH TED & FRIENDS** —6:00 pm In person and via Zoom. Contact Doug Asbury for more information at [dougasbury@gmail.com](mailto:dougasbury@gmail.com).  
**12/24 to 1/7** — Sundays with TED will be on break.

**UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONALS** — Copies of the January - February Upper Room are available in the sanctuary and in the rack outside the office.

**PICKLEBALL, ANYONE?** We now have a net and lines marked in the church gym for those who would like to play. Kathi Rocanova will be convening a group on Saturdays at 11 am, and other timeslots are available upon request. Contact Kathi (708) 204-0466 or Pastor Mark for more info.



Reverend Zimmerly and the staff  
of the Riverside Presbyterian Church  
wish you a very Merry Christmas  
and a new year filled with peace and joy!

## THIS WEEK

### Today

10:00 am Worship

11:00 am Fellowship

4:00 pm Christmas Eve

Lessons & Carols

### Tuesday

6:30 am Men's Forum

### Sunday

10:00 am Carols and Cocoa

## Riverside Presbyterian Church

116 Barrypoint Road, Riverside, IL 60546

(708) 447-1520, [rpcusa.org](http://rpcusa.org)

Sermons available at

[Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Riverside Presbyterian, IL

### **Our Mission Statement:**

We gather as a church to:

Celebrate God's presence,

Nurture the Spiritual Life,

Carry the light of Christ into the world,

Serve God by serving others.

### **RPC Staff**

**Rev. Mark Zimmerly**, Pastor,  
[mark@rpcusa.org](mailto:mark@rpcusa.org); 708-202-9874

**Linda Hutcheson**, Office Manager,  
[rpcoffice@rpcusa.org](mailto:rpcoffice@rpcusa.org)

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**Lynda Nadkarni**, Coordinator of Children's  
Ministries, [lynda@rpcusa.org](mailto:lynda@rpcusa.org)

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**Doug Asbury**, Volunteer in Mission,  
[dougasbury@gmail.com](mailto:dougasbury@gmail.com)

## 2023 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

	2023	2024	2025
Elders	Lisa Aulerich Marciniak Jon Jansky Sandra Kappmeyer	Susan Lynch Carrie Staubus Mary Beth Wynn	Betsy Gardner Ellen Hamilton Serina Ranft Mary Ann Sadilek, Clerk
Deacons	Nancy Dvorak Elizabeth Musick Marilyn Slanec	Jim Marciniak Steve Marcus Wendy Seifert	Thom DeVries Paula McCracken Open
Trustees	Doug Harvin Henry Vogel Open	John McGlennon Lynda Nadkarni Open	Deb Jansky Tom Radigan Open