The Cornerstone

Rolling Hills United Methodist Church
26438 Crenshaw Blvd.
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274
310-377-6771

December 2016

Saturday, December 17

Christmas Concert, 7 p.m.

Handel's *Messiah*
Festival of the Nativity

Christmas Eve Worship – December 24

4 p.m. – Children's Service – Carols & Nativity
8 p.m. – A Musical Christmas with 3rd service ensemble
11 p.m. – Candlelight, Carols and Communion

Christmas Day Worship – December 25

10:00 a.m. – Christmas Stories and Chancel Choir

from the pastors — *Jonathan Chute*

A member of the synagogue asked their rabbi, "Why does a rabbi always answer a question with a question?" The rabbi replied, "Why *shouldn't* a rabbi answer a question with a question?" This came to me recently as a number of people have asked if we were having church on Christmas Day. My answer – "Is it a Sunday?" – is not meant to be argumentative! It's just that since the beginning of the Church we Christians have always met for worship on Sunday.

Jesus and his family worshiped in the synagogue on the seventh day of the week, the sabbath, which for us would be Saturday (though in the Jewish calendar it actually begins with sundown on Friday). That was the day on which God rested after the work of creation, and the day on which God's people were given to rest as the fourth of the ten commandments.

The early Christians continued to worship in the synagogue and at the temple for a number of years. But they also began to gather on Sundays to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus an event which took place on the first day of the week. That's been our pattern for almost two thousand years.

So this year, Christmas is on a Sunday. And we will gather for worship as we do each week – but not *exactly* as we do each week. We will have a single morning service at 10 a.m., and no Sunday evening service, out of recognition of the three lovely services we will have shared the night before. Worshiping together on Christmas Day is truly a special experience.

Our Christmas Eve celebration starts with the Children's Service at 4 p.m. This is the single most well-attended service of the year. They do such a wonderful job, and the place is packed with warm and joyful hearts. At 8 p.m. our third service ensemble will lead us in a musical Christmas Eve, with folk, blues and bluegrass accompaniment to familiar carols. At 11 p.m. we will share communion, and finish the service by candlelight as the choir leads us out into the dark with the lovely sounds of "Silent Night."

It's a special and hopeful time for God's people. I look forward to sharing it with all of you. This month there are opportunities to explore the meaning of the season through Bible study and creative writing, by decorating the sanctuary, making an Advent craft for your home, visiting the Festival of the Nativity in Wesley Hall, gathering to hear the choir and orchestra in their presentation of Handel's *Messiah*. It is a rich, festive and joyful time.

After I say that we're just having one service on Christmas Day, sometimes they ask whether we're doing that on New Year's Day too. So I answer with a question: "Are we doing three amazing services on New Year's Eve?" I didn't think so. We'll be back in full swing so that we can start the new year on a bright and hopeful note!

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

April Herron

Dear Friends:

We have arrived at a time of year when the songs are especially beautiful, the stories are especially poignant, and our hearts are especially full. I'd like to invite you to join me at either or both of two different Advent gatherings if it suits your schedule. Both gatherings are designed to help us sense God's nearness in this season of anticipation and wonder.

The first will happen on Thursday, December 8, at 10:30 am in the Mission Room. We will focus on **Making Room for Jesus** by studying **favorite carols and scripture passages** for clues on how to welcome the Christ child. Jan Bunker will accompany us and lead our singing. We will conclude no later than noon. You can let me know of your plans to attend by emailing april@rhumc.org.

The second is an **Advent Writing Workshop**, to be held on Tuesday, December 13, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in the Aldersgate Room. Lorrie Tom, an experienced writing teacher, will help lead. We'll engage a particular scripture text through creative writing and personal reflection, followed by sharing and celebrating the gifts of our time together. For questions or to sign up, email mrslorrainetom@gmail.com or april@rhumc.org, or call the church office: 310-377-6771. Childcare is available upon request; please let us know well in advance.

If you want to engage in a spiritual growth study this month and need something you could do independently, check out the **eLearning option** at UpperRoom.org. I am currently working my way through a course in "Practicing Compassion" by Frank Rogers. If you choose the eLearning route, you get access not only to the book, but also to a series of short videos featuring the author, some guided meditations, and some reflection questions.

May hope, peace, joy and love be yours as God draws near.

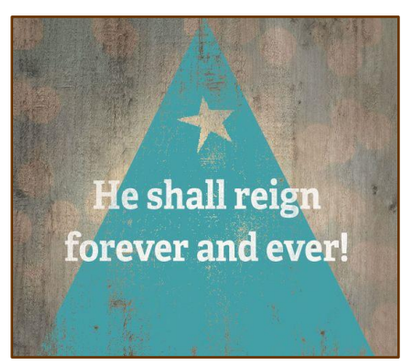
April

Advent Prayer from Martha Rowlett

In this December season of lengthening darkness, our hearts wait eagerly for the light of the Christmas message. In a time of alienation and anger we are ready to remember your love for all of your creation. In the middle of confused babble of conflicting claims, we are eager to listen for your clear calling to the hopeful future you prepare for us. Touch the deep places of our being with the miracle and mystery of your eternal presence with us, within us and among us. Strengthen our souls so that we may become the people you have made us to be. Bless us with joy as we celebrate your gift of love to us in Jesus by giving to others our gifts of love. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Chancel Choir Christmas Concert - Handel's epic *Messiah*

The Chancel Choir will be joined by the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles in our Christmas Season Concert to be presented on Saturday, December 17, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary in a performance of the Christmas portion and other sections of Handel's epic *Messiah*. Soloists for this performance will be Sopranos Jessica Tisdale and Abigail Whitman, Mezzo-Soprano Iris Malkin, Tenor Ashley Faatoalia, and Bass Cedric Berry. Friends from the community will also join the choir. This is a ticketed concert with open seating. Tickets are $10 and may be purchased on the patio after Sunday morning services or weekdays in the church office between 9:00-5:00 p.m.



Trek to the Tree

The Trek to the Tree program offers an opportunity to provide gifts or gift cards for over 300 children and teenagers at Toberman Neighborhood Center in San Pedro for Christmas. Simply select a tag from the Christmas tree in the narthex and take it to the friendly Trek table where your tag number and name will be recorded. The tags go fast so grab them while they last! A special thank you to Noucha Jasanis for organizing this worthwhile project.

Hanging of the Greens

The Advent Season has arrived! The Worship Committee invites you to continue to share the holiday spirit by helping us transform the church on:

Saturday, December 3rd, 8-10 AM – Decorating the Sanctuary

& Saturday, December 17th, 8-9 AM – Poinsettia Time

And then what goes up, must come down. We will be taking down the Narthex Tree Monday, December 26th, 8 AM & the rest of the decorations after the 10 AM service on January 1st.

Festival of the Nativity

The Missions Committee has announced a return this year of the beautiful Festival of the Nativity. We encourage everyone in our church family to display your own personal family nativity (or multiples if you have more than one) during the Festival. The nativities will be on display in Wesley Hall on Saturday, Dec. 17 after our Christmas Concert that evening and also before and after all services on Sunday, December 18. You can participate in two ways: (i) register to display your nativity by completing the registration form--enclosed in this issue and also available in the office and narthex--and we will contact you about participation logistics and (ii) come by Wesley Hall that weekend to witness the beauty of the birth of Christ artistically depicted through an array of nativities. This year we will be taking a free-will offering to benefit Pediatric Therapy Network and Los Amigos Sin Barreras. For more information, contact Kathy Platnick at ksanders@omm.com or 213-479-950.

FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY

PARTICIPATION FORM

DECEMBER 17 and 18

You can also register via email at ksanders@omm.com

Name:_____

Email:_____

Phone:_____

Briefly describe your nativity:

_____

_____

Check approximate space needed to display your nativity:

___ 6 in. by 6 in. **___24 in. by 30 in.**

___ 12 in. by 12 in. **___48 in. by 30 in.**

Poinsettia Sales

We try to make it easy for you to order poinsettias to be given ***In Honor of a Loved One***, ***In Memory of a Loved One*** or ***To the Glory of God***. Just fill out a form and turn it in with payment of $15 a plant, or 2 for $25. You may send it to the office, give it to the Worship Committee volunteer on the patio or place it in the offering plate. December 11th is the last day to place your order!

Help us decorate the Sanctuary with poinsettias for Christmas!

You are invited to purchase one or more poinsettia plants to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas. The plants can be dedicated a few different ways.

☐ To the Glory of God

☐ In Honor of: _____

_____

_____

☐ In Memory of: _____

_____

_____

Given by: _____

Number of plants: _____ Amount paid: _____

Cash: _____ Check number: _____

Please make checks payable to RHUMC for $15 per plant, or 2 for $25. Give this order form and payment to the volunteers staffing the table on the patio, place in the offering basket, or send to the office. Thank you!

THE LAST DAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11TH.

Salvation Army – Ringing of the Bells

With the help of Christmas kettles, the Salvation Army aids more than 3 million individuals at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Over the past 3 years, RHUMC bell ringers raised over $4100 for needy families in the South Bay. During this holiday season, why not volunteer as a bell ringer? You can ring the bell as a family, with your friends or individually – it is up to you! Last year, we had groups that sang Christmas carols, played holiday music on their phones, or just rang the bell with a friendly smile. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about this wonderful cause, contact Roxanne Morse at 310-543-2281. Your help will go a long way for people in need!

Join us for a
Day of Holiday Cheer
featuring merry crafts
for all ages!

Saturday, December 10
11am to 1:30pm
Wesley Hall

Create you own door charms made with fresh greenery, ornament making, cookie decorating— and more!

◆ ◆ ◆

Hot cocoa, apple cider and Christmas music will be on hand to usher in the holiday spirit. We hope you can come!

◆ ◆ ◆

RSVP to Family Ministries at familyministries@rhumc.org or (310)377-6771.

Parents Day Out

Saturday, December 10th
1:00-5:00 pm
Located at RHUMC
$25 first child
$10 for each additional child

Drop your kids off for 4 hours of games, crafts, movies and fun, while you finish up your Christmas Shopping! All proceeds will support Sierra Service Project. Space is limited! Reserve your spot today!

RSVP TODAY!
KIMMIE@RHUMC.ORG

What Every Parent Wants for Christmas!

Kid Zone Invites You
to an All-Church

Holiday Carnival

All are welcome to join us in getting into the holiday spirit.
There will be food, games and holiday crafts. Fun for all ages!

When: **December 15, 2016**
Time: 3:30 to 5:15
Where: RHUMC Wesley Hall

Hope to see you there!

Kid Zone presents...

Winter Wonderland Camp!

December 19th – 22nd

Kindergarten - 5th Grade

Early Bird Discount of
5% off if you
register and pay in full
before
December 9, 2016

For more information:
kidzone.midzone@gmail.com
(310) 377-7302

Attention All Children and Youth!

BE A PART OF THE 4 PM CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE!

All children and youth
(ages 3 years old thru 12th grade)
are invited to participate in the Christmas Eve
Worship service on December 24th at 4:00 p.m.
The children will sing, ring chimes, and act out the roles of the Nativity.
Middle schoolers will read scripture and lead the candle-lighting ceremony.
Youth 6th-12th grade will ring hand bells.

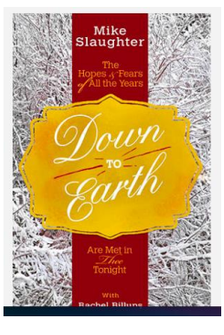
This will be a special and meaningful service,
but ONE PRACTICE is required to prepare.
The mandatory practice will be on
Saturday, December 17.
9:00-11:00 a.m.: children 3 years old thru 5th grade
11:30-12:30 p.m.: Middle School & High School

If your children and youth would like to participate, please contact
Kimmie Stradling at kimmie@rhumc.org,
Jan Johnson at janaleejoh@aol.com
or call the church office at 310-377-6771.

Heifer Plus Sunday Gratitude!

Thanks to the congregation for making Heifer Plus and the Mission Market Sunday a success on November 13. Contributions to Heifer International, Habitat for Humanity and our four sponsored missionaries totaled over $11,000 and are very much appreciated. Additionally, sales of Fletcher Larson's "pickled delights" and Red Bird Mission Crafts raised over $1,000. Thanks to everyone who participated for your enthusiasm and generosity.

Bible Study Class



Join us Sunday mornings from 10:00-11:00 a.m. in the Aldersgate Room for Bible Study. During Advent we will be reading *Down to Earth* by Mike Slaughter. The title refers to "God incarnate" coming "Down to Earth" to take on human form and what that means to us during this season of the year.

Fanfare to the Thanksgiving Dinner People

Unlike Aaron Copeland's musical tribute "Fanfare to the Common Man," we want to salute the "uncommon" men, women and youth who worked together to create a masterful Thanksgiving Dinner Event for over 200 RHUMC members and friends. A rousing fanfare and sincere thanks to our crew who worked many hours to put this event together. Without them, we could not have made this dinner happen! We salute the following:

Dale and Linda Gehr
Fletcher Larson
Shirley Fehrman
Tami and Larry Kittiver
Curt Wuestenhagen
Sally Whitney
Marilyn Zitar
Lorie-Anne Fung
Kimmie Stradling
Oren Sheldon
Don Pedersen
Merrietta Fong
Steve McCall
Rita Guiton
Karin Frazier
Mark Raggio
Diana Davis
Kathy Johnson
Tom & Betsy Coleman
Elaine VanAmburgh
Kim Hall
Clarence Fung
Kathy Bartow
Nicole Benson
Bob Bailiff
Bob Chamberlain
Jim Krause
Lois & Jim Moore
Phyllis Goetz
Doug Kendle
Shirley & Bill Bails
Carolyn Oberparleiter
Claire & Don McCurry
Kathy Neisheim
Marian Komori
Brendon Fung
Michie Hirooka
Debra de Luca
Jim Showalter
Gene Koester
Connie Martin
Sylvia Freije
Peggy Roulette

We also want to salute the youth who helped! Around twenty of them served in the buffet lines, poured water in the glasses, lit the candles, carried out the dirty dishes, and helped clean up Wesley Hall at the end of the dinner. With Kimmie giving direction, they made our job immeasurably easier and we are grateful! Net proceeds from the dinner will help some of our youth attend the Sierra Service Project next summer. We think enjoying a great dinner, while helping the youth with their mission project, is a good reason for everybody to come again next year!

With much gratitude!

Suellen Fung and Doug Kemps
Co-chairpersons

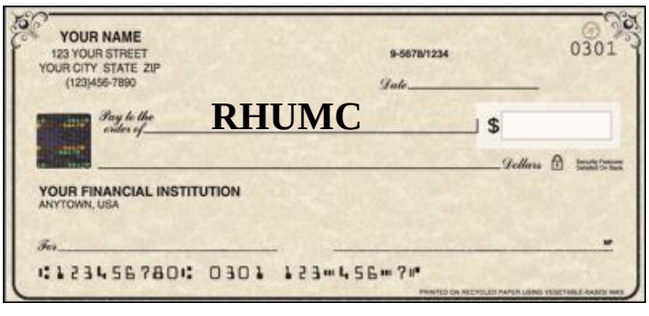
A Way to Be Generous

Are you an IRA owner and over 70½?

IRA owners who are 70-1/2 or older can make gifts to qualified charities from their IRAs of any amount, up to a maximum of $100,000 per year. Each year RHUMC members and friends choose to support the church's mission in exactly this way. Here are some helpful things to know:

- Qualified Charitable Distributions count toward the IRA owner's required minimum distribution for the year.
- Any such gift is not included in taxable income. Since the IRA owner avoids paying tax on the distribution, there is no corresponding charitable deduction.
- IRA owners should review the rules with their tax advisors prior to year-end to determine if they can benefit and to make the best use of this powerful method to support charitable causes, either for 2016 or into the future.

What's in a Name?



Well, according to the bank, a lot. They are getting more particular about how the checks we deposit are made out. To make life simple, please make checks payable to RHUMC – easier than writing it all out, & very clear.
Thanks!

Church Blood Drive

Mark your calendar:

Torrance Memorial Blood Donor Center
Friday, March 3rd, 8:00am - 2:00pm and
Monday, March 6th, 8:00am - 5:00pm

More detailed information will follow in the February *Cornerstone*.
Sponsored by the Health and Wellness Team

Altar Flowers

The new flower chart for 2017 has arrived and is posted in the narthex! Sign up early to ensure you get your favorite date to honor, celebrate, or remember that someone special!

Second Sunday Supper

We hope you can join us for dinner on **December 11** after third service in Wesley Hall. The menu will include roasted chicken from El Pollo Inka, brown rice and a tossed salad. The requested donation for each meal is $5 per person, $15 per family.

Club Maintenance

Club Maintenance met Saturday, November 12 to shorten the task list. Dave Larson and Keith Levan worked spreading wood chips, Oren Sheldon cleaned all the handrails on the steps and ramp, Clarence Fung cleaned the roofs and gutters of buildings B and C, Jim Showalter cleaned the fountain, Jim and Steve Boilard changed light bulbs in and out of the sanctuary, Bob Chamberlin and Jonathan Chute polished the brass door handles to the sanctuary, and Bill Bails repaired sidewalks.

Club Maintenance will not meet in December but will reconvene on Saturday, January 14, at 8:30 a.m.

Senior Pastor	Jonathan Chute	Music Director	Chuck Dickerson
Assoc. Pastor	April Herron	Organist/Pianist	Althea Waites
		3rd Service Ensemble	Patti MacLeod
Preschool Director	Myra Ghabrial	Adm. Assist. to Pastor	Curt Wuestenhagen
Director of Children & Youth Ministries	Kimmie Stradling	Church Office Admin.	Peggy Roulette
		Admin. Assistant	Ana Ysabel Lopez
Family Ministries Dir.	Rachel Stam	Treasurer	Robin La Tourette
KidZone Director	Megan Pelc	Bookkeeper	Nicole Lowery Zakman
Junior High Youth	Nicole Benson	Facilities Manager	Rick Mitchell
Parish Nurse	Annette Matsuda	Custodian	Miguel Portillo
Church Office Phone	310-377-6771		
Fax Line	310-544-4123	Resident Bishop	Grant Hagiya
Web Site	www.rhumc.org	District Superintendent	Mark Nakagawa

SUNDAY WORSHIP HOURS
8:30 & 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Next Cornerstone deadline is December 19
www.rhumc.org