The Cornerstone

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

December 2021

from the pastors *Jonathan Chute*

"For behold, I bring you good news of great joy for all the people." That's the announcement the shepherds heard, out in the dark of night on the hills outside Bethlehem. When you think about it, it's kind of an unlikely place to make such a proclamation. Even now, Bethlehem is a small town. In the 1st century it was really more of a village. Writing a headline of such significance across the skies outside a small Judean settlement doesn't seem like very good marketing. Go to Jerusalem, the regional capital. Go to Rome, seat of the empire. "Go big, or go home," they say.

And the shepherds are an equally unlikely, improbable audience for such news. They were seen as living outside the bounds of civil society. There, among the hills, out of sight of good people of the village, who knew what they were up to? Shepherds were seen, categorically, as breakers of the law. Following their sheep across the landscape, they were unavoidably guilty of trespass and occasionally guilty of causing damage and destruction. As a group they were not allowed to give testimony in courts of law.

So, who better to tell than shepherds on a hillside out in the middle of nowhere? Anyone, that's who! There's no one anywhere near for them to tell about it. And if they did, who would believe them anyway? If the goal is to let the world know that the Messiah has been born, this whole approach seems doomed to failure.

But maybe that's exactly how it had to go. Considering all that stood against this improbable plan, Bethlehem would have been a whole lot safer than Jerusalem or Rome. Earthly powers tend not to take it very well when heaven breaks into their well-ordered reality. Neither small-time Herods nor leaders of empires welcome that kind of intrusion.

It takes time for some seeds to take root. They need to be left alone, doing their work out of sight, even in the dark. There it is quieter, safer, with room to develop and grow before breaking out into the light of day. If that is how God chose to come to us in the birth of the Messiah, perhaps it is in such out of the way places, and among such unlikely audiences, that we might look for God's good news to come to the world today.

May the improbable and unexpected blessing of Advent be yours.

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

April Herron

Dear Friends:

I have received an early Christmas gift. I think we are all going to enjoy it! This assessment is based on all the positive responses to the Advent stoles Jonathan and I are wearing as we lead Sunday morning worship on the four Sundays prior to Christmas. The stoles were new last year, but the congregation was present virtually, rather than in person, so the rich blue design was not as easy to see and appreciate. This year, the in-person worshippers are really noticing the way the stoles suggest starlight and hope.

The early Christmas gift became necessary because Jonathan and I needed an addition to our very small collection of what might be referred to as "liturgical face masks." The gift is, in fact, a face mask that matches the RHUMC Advent stoles and paraments. Jonathan received one too. Both were courtesy of Chris Larson, our multi-talented Worship Committee Chair.

The day after the first Sunday in Advent, Chris was at the church office as Jonathan and I were reflecting on the fact that our green stoles had been enhanced by face masks made by Chris early in the pandemic. In that instance, the match had been a coincidence: Chris created and presented the masks well before we ordered and received the stoles and paraments used after Epiphany and during Ordinary Time. Now, we were feeling the need for something similar to complete the Advent set. "Could you whip something up by this evening?" Jonathan asked with a laugh. He thought he was joking. But sure enough, by evening the masks were in our hands.

This is just one example of the many ways each of you enhance the life and ministry of the church by sharing your gifts and talents. It participates in the spirit of caring for the child born in Bethlehem. So too does the collecting of gifts for the Toberman Neighborhood Center to share with children and families, the contributing of funds to worldwide mission projects, the offering of shawls to friends among us who are sick or sorrowing, the working around our church campus to fix what is broken and enhance our ability to offer hospitality, the delivering of poinsettias to dear ones in need of encouragement. Thank you all for your generosity!

May God's great gift to us, of Jesus come to dwell among us, bring joy and peace to the world.

April

New Health and Wellness Opportunity - by Annette Matsuda

"DOLPHINS!" Just before eight of us embarked on our trail walk in November, Irene spotted a large and active pod covering a large area of the ocean before us. Thrilled, we marveled at their behaviors and grace for a while before we started walking.

Join members of our Health and Wellness Team and Parish Nurse early in this wondrous Advent season for an outdoor walk, featuring spectacular beach and ocean views! Get some exercise, connect with new and old friends, possibly sight dolphins again, and enjoy God's creation! Optional: lunch at Nelson's Restaurant on the resort following the walk.

Thursday, December 9, 9:45 a.m.
Terranea Resort
100 Terranea Way
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275

Meet inside the hotel lobby, just to the right when you enter the hotel, near the fireplace. We will begin our walk at 10:00. Parking - Ask the parking attendant to direct you to the free parking lot.

Masks: If you are fully vaccinated, facial coverings are optional. The CDC advises individuals who are not fully vaccinated to continue wearing facial coverings.

Please email Annette Matsuda at annettematsuda@gmail.com or call the church office at 310-377-6771 if you plan to attend.

But the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.
- Habakkuk 2:14 NRSV

Women's Retreat
"Walking in the Light of God"

February 25-27, 2022
Oceanside, CA

Sign ups will begin in January

A BOOK DISCUSSION SERIES

SEEING WITH NEW EYES

ONE MEMOIR. TWO NOVELS.

MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 7 PM
SITTING PRETTY
by REBEKAH TAUSSIG

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 7 PM
BEHOLD THE DREAMERS
by IMBOLO MBUE

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 7 PM
EVERYTHING SAD IS UNTRUE
by DANIEL NAYERI

Geography. History. Culture. Story. Life Experience. A change of perspective on various elements that play a role in our lives can reveal new insights and provoke deeper understandings.

April Herron will lead the discussions.

Please register by emailing:
april@rhumc.org.

All readers are welcome!

Trek to the Tree

It is that wondrous time of the year! Trek to the Tree collections will begin on Sunday, November 28 and run through Sunday, December 12. These donations bring holiday joy for those at the Toberman Neighborhood Center.

Here are the options for participating this year:

- Pick an ornament from our big beautiful Christmas tree in the Narthex after church services to buy a gift for a child aged 1-9. Bring your unwrapped gift (no stuffed animals or weapons please) back to the tree or drop it off at the church office.
- Order directly from Toberman's Amazon Wish List accessible at Toberman Amazon Wish List.
- Donate cash for the purchase of $25 Target gift cards for youth 10 and older. You can write a check payable to RHUMC with Trek to the Tree in the memo line and either stop by the Trek to the Tree table after church services, mail your check to the church, or drop it off at the church office.
- You can also donate online at rhumc.org. Please include Trek to the Tree in the designated giving line.

Whichever way you choose to participate, please note that we need all toys and monetary donations no later than Sunday, December 12. Thank you all in advance for your continuous generosity. And thank you to Noucha Jasanis for her 19th year of coordinating Trek to the Tree!

Poinsettia Sales

It is 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 place an order on the church website www.rhumc.org or 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 or place it in the offering plate. December 6 is the last day to place your order!

Hanging of the Greens

We had great fun decorating the tree in the narthex. The Worship Committee now invites you to get into the holiday spirit by helping us decorate the sanctuary. We invite you to put on your mask and join us on Saturday, December 4, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

We will enjoy the majestic tree in the narthex throughout the season of Advent as it graces our celebration of Christmas. The tree will be taken down on Monday, December 27. If you can help, please arrive at 8:00 a.m. And all the rest of the Christmas decorations will be taken down after the 10:00 a.m. service on January 2. Please stay and help! Thanks!

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: _____

Email: _____

Number of plants:_____ Amount paid: _____

Cash: _____ Check number: _____

Please make checks payable to RHUMC for $15 per plant, or 2 for $25. Please place in the offering plate or bring or mail this form to the church office. The last day to order plants is December 6th.

Thank you!

A Huge Thank You from the Missions Committee

The members of the Mission Committee would like to thank all of you that donated so generously to our Mission Fiesta Sunday campaign. So far, we have collected over $12,000 and the checks are still coming in! The donations from Mission Fiesta Sunday go towards supporting Heifer International, Habitat for Humanity, and our four church supported missionaries. We so appreciate your support of our efforts to support these wonderful organizations.

Salvation Army - Ringing of the Bells by Roxanne Morse

The Salvation Army is once again bringing the sound of bells to a shopping area near you! If you would like to volunteer for a total commitment of 1.5 hours for an evening that works best for you, please contact Roxanne Morse at 310-543-2281. We have had many volunteers over the years and the Salvation Army is very grateful for our commitment to making our community a better place for everyone.

I look forward to connecting with volunteers who are new or seasoned……and thank you for considering this wonderful way to keep much needed resources/services here. I will supply the tools like aprons and kettles, and you can provide the Christmas smiles and cheer.

Altar Flowers

Blame it on *supply chain* issues, but the new flower chart for 2022 has finally arrived! Sign up early to ensure you get your favorite date to honor, celebrate, or remember that someone special!

Club Maintenance - by Dave Larson

On November 13 a hard-working group took care of many items on our maintenance work list. The next opportunity to participate in the Club Maintenance effort will be at 8:30 a.m. on January 8, 2022. Please mark this date on your calendar and share in the ongoing work to keep our facilities in good repair. Your participation will be greatly appreciated no matter what your skill level is. In December some Club Maintenance folks will be helping with Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary.

Arts & Crafts,
Sports and Games

For more information:
kidzone.midzone@rhumc.org
310-377-7302

Gabby Palacios
323-610-2253

Kid Zone presents…

Winter Camp!
December 20, 21 & 22

Tk-Kindergarten – 8th Grade
*We will be following recommendations from the CDC and from the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing.

Daily Rate 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. - $90
Early Care 7:30-8:30 a.m. - $10/day

KID ZONE MEMBER
Daily Rate 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. - $85

Rolling Hills United Methodist Preschool

- Thank you for all who supported our Thanksgiving offering of canned goods. The children's presentation of songs followed by a beautiful picnic on the patio made for a special time together. All of the canned goods were donated to the Toberman Neighborhood Center in San Pedro.

- We look forward to our Christmas Nativity Program presentations on December 13, 14 & 15 with all of our children taking part.

- No Family Night Out scheduled in December.

Youth Ministries

Ignite Youth Ministry

Wednesday, Dec. 1: **Christmas Jeopardy** 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Team up and test your knowledge of Christmas traditions around the world.

Wednesday, Dec. 8: **Poinsettias and Carols** 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Youth and their families can sign up to help deliver poinsettia plants and sing carols to congregation members. Due to COVID19 precautions youth will stay in their family units to make the deliveries, so parents are needed to drive and siblings are welcome to help! If you chose to extend your "bubble" to drive with other youth families, that is up to each family's discretion. Please RSVP by 12/5 for Kristin to coordinate your supplies!

Wednesday, Dec. 15: **Ignite Christmas Party** 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Wear a silly Christmas sweater and join us for gingerbread house building, ornaments decorating, and other fun activities. This is the last Ignite of the year. We will resume with a spring semester kick off on February 2, 2022.

Youth Sunday School

We are offering a hybrid class, with in-person and Zoom participation options on Sundays during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. We are also gathering during the 5:30 service for in-person Sunday School.

Rev. Kristin Reksc, Director of Youth Ministries
Cell phone: 562-234-0161 **Email:** Kristin@rhumc.org
Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/RHyouth **Instagram**: rhumcyouth_

"Loving Thy Neighbor"
Youth Service Project Photo

Children's Ministry

PLEASE COME & JOIN YOUR
SUNDAY SCHOOL FRIENDS FOR OUR

Christmas Movie Night @ RHUMC

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4TH @ 7:00PM
WEAR YOUR PJ'S AND BRING A PILLOW OR BLANKET
SPACE IS LIMITED AND RSVP'S A MUST!
RSVP TO DEBRA@RHUMC.ORG
MASKS ARE MANDATORY

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26438 Crenshaw Blvd.
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274

Change Service Requested

SAVE OUR PLANET!

Have your Cornerstone sent via email; it's easy, just call the church office at 310-377-6771. You can also view the Cornerstone on the church website at www.rhumc.org

Senior Pastor	Jonathan Chute	Associate Pastor	April Herron
Senior Pastor Emeritus	Martha Rowlett	Music Director	Chuck Dickerson
Preschool Director	Myra Ghabrial	Organist/Pianist	Althea Waites
Parish Nurse	Annette Matsuda	3rd Service Music	Paula Kuno
Children's Ministry Dir.	Debra DeLuca	Exec. Asst. to Pastor	Roksolana Vecerek
Youth Ministry Pastor	Kristin Reksc	Church Office Admin.	Peggy Roulette
Kid Zone Director	Gabby Palacios	Custodian	Miguel Portillo
Treasurer	John Fitzgerald		
Church Business Mgr.	Nicole Lowery Zakman		

Church Office Phone	310-377-6771	Resident Bishop	Grant J. Hagiya
Fax Line	310-544-4123	District Superintendent	Mark Nakagawa
Web Site	www.rhumc.org		

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 24
www.rhumc.org