ROLLING HILLS
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Cornerstone

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

December 2023

from the pastors *Jonathan Chute*

We find ourselves at both the beginning and the end of the year. Advent, the season of four Sundays leading up to Christmas, marks the start of what is known as the Christian Year. We are invited into a time of anticipation, expectation and preparation as we look once more to how God is moving in and among us.

We also come to the close of the calendar year, and welcome in the new. I am not much for New Year's resolutions. But I can't help but look with hope at the year to come. What it will include none of us knows. But the signs of grace and hope breaking forth even in the darkness of winter are hard to ignore.

We launched a wonderful new program, under the care of Kristin Sutrave, our Associate Pastor for Youth and Congregational Care, that has connected trained and caring members of our congregation with others when an encouraging word or a gentle touch is indicated. So far more than three hundred such contacts have taken place, and the number of Congregational Care Ministers (CCMs) continues to grow.

We had a record number of children and families sign up for Winter Wonderland. Our youth will be delivering poinsettias and singing carols with forty or so members of our congregation and community next week. Comfort & Courage for the Holidays is being offered for persons who feel the absence of loved ones especially in this season. Advent Bible Study, sanctuary decorating, Trek to the Tree for Toberman are all coming together.

Our choir is putting together a wonderful Christmas concert, together with the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, and are having fun welcoming new friends into their midst.

This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, so we will begin the day with our regular morning worship, and move on to the Children's Christmas Eve at 4 p.m., a musical Christmas with the 3rd service ensemble at 8, and candles, carols and communion at 10 p.m.

With all of this unfolding before us I want to plant the seed of an even more generous and hopeful future together. Please mark your calendars for Friday and Saturday, February 2-3, when our next long range planning retreat will take place at RHUMC. We will look to identify our best strengths as a congregation, and decide how to build upon the gifts we have been given. April and I had fun with the 12 Keys Bible Study this past fall. We'll be drawing upon what we learned there and discovering where God is leading in the years to come.

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

April Herron

Dear Friends,

As Advent begins I am feeling grateful for California warmth. I'm wearing way fewer layers of clothing than I was in New York, but even more importantly your enthusiasm about my return to RHUMC has gladdened my heart.

My time with my grandson, daughter, and son-in-law was, of course, wonderful. I spent a lot of time at the neighborhood playground and library, which are magnets of after school activity for the preschool set. When accompanying Vinny to the park for soccer or ice skating I was thrilled by the glorious colors of the trees which changed both gradually and dramatically. I experienced first hand the creativity put into the trick-or-treating festivities and the astonishing magnitude of New York City's Halloween celebrations. I enjoyed the opportunity to go, in person with family and friends, to the Macy's Day Parade. We also showed up to cheer on the runners in the NYC Marathon. I visited the Brooklyn Botanic Garden both by day and by night and made several trips to the New York Aquarium (one of Vinny's favorite places) at Coney Island. Bob and I joined Vinny in playing with Duplos and Magna Tiles and Disney characters and a vast array of cars and trucks. I supervised a lot of baths. I also had time for reading, journaling, gazing at art, and savoring a delicious array of foods. I worshiped with the Park Slope UMC and a sweet Episcopal Church that has a special ministry to families with young children. The weeks passed quickly and were everything I could have hoped.

The opportunity to be away was made possible by the strength and diversity of the clergy and lay people in ministry together here at RHUMC. Like the song says, this is a place of many gifts and one Spirit. I am thankful to be back among you as Advent begins. Many special experiences await us. Among them is the opportunity to learn how to tend to our grief even as we celebrate Christmas. Claire Towle will be presenting thoughtful strategies for dwelling in God's grace which are helpful whether your loss of a loved one was recent or some time in the past. I highly recommend the December 7 workshop and would welcome seeing you at either 2:00 pm or 7:00 pm in the Aldersgate Room.

The peace of Christ to one and all,

April

Chancel Choir's Christmas Concert - Saturday, December 16

This year's RHUMC Chancel Choir Christmas Concert will be the first in a series of three concerts that will feature the entirety of Handel's best known masterwork - Messiah. This much beloved baroque work is divided into three sections. Part I features the prophecy of Christ's coming, the birth of Christ, and the announcement of His birth to the shepherds. Part II focuses on Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, shares about the first spreading of the gospel throughout the world, and ends with the definitive musical statement of God's glory with the *Hallelujah Chorus.* Part III opens with the promise of redemption, followed by a prediction of the day of judgment, and ends with the final victory over sin and death and the acclamation of Christ.

The Chancel Choir's Christmas Concert will feature Part I and will be presented at 7:00 p.m. on **Saturday, December 16**. Part II, commonly referred to as the Easter Section, will be presented on Good Friday, March 29. Part III will be presented on Sunday, April 7.

The choir will be joined by members of the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles for these performances, by soloists from the choir and elsewhere, and by singers from our community and our sister churches. Tickets for the Part I performance are available now, and may be purchased for $10 on the patio or in the church office.

JOIN OUR CELEBRATION - by Barbara Addleman

Martha Circle will be holding their annual Christmas Luncheon at the home of Barbara Addleman on Monday, December 11, at 12:00 p.m. We want to extend an invitation to any women of the church who would like to come and join in our celebration of the Christmas season. We will be having Lisa's Chinese Chicken Salad and the cost will be $15.00 per person. Please RSVP to Barbara if you would like to come or have any questions at baddleman@cox.net or call at 310-541-6472 or (Cell) 310-940-5002.

A Warm Thank You from Patty Koester

What a Blessing our Church family has been to us both.
We are grateful for the love and care Gene and I received these past months.
Please accept my heartfelt gratitude.

Bible Study for Adults

Christ in The Sights and Sounds of Advent

WEDNESDAYS:

2 pm – In Person

OR

7 pm – Via Zoom

NOVEMBER 29:
Do You See What I See?

DECEMBER 6:
Do You Hear What I Hear?

DECEMBER 13:
Do You Taste What I Taste?

DECEMBER 20:
Do You Feel What I Feel?

Our senses help create our experience of Christmas. We can read scripture with attention to what is being seen, heard, tasted, and felt - by us, and by God as God becomes human and dwells among us! This intriguing and insightful study will deepen our understanding and appreciation of God's presence.

Classes are led by April Herron. Please email churchoffice@rhumc.org to indicate your plans to participate. The book by Matt Rawle is available in the church office for $15. Alternatively, you may purchase an ebook version directly from your bookseller.

Hanging of the Greens

The Worship Committee invites you to get into the holiday spirit by helping us prepare the church for Christmas. We invite you to join us on:

Sat., December 2, 8:30-10:30 a.m. - Decorating the huge Narthex tree

Sat., December 9, 8:30-10:30 a.m. - Decorating the Sanctuary

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 Tuesday, December 26. 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 7. Please stay and help! Thanks!

Trek to the Tree

It is that wondrous time of the year! Trek to the Tree collections will begin on **Sunday, December 3, and run through Sunday, December 10.** 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.
- 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 **Tuesday, December 12**. Thank you all in advance for your continuous generosity. And thank you to Noucha Jasanis for her 21st year of coordinating Trek to the Tree!

COMFORT & COURAGE
FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A GATHERING FOR BEREAVED FAMILY MEMBERS

THURSDAY
DECEMBER 7, 2023
CHOOSE:
2 PM or 7 PM
ALDERSGATE ROOM

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Whether you have experienced the death of a child, spouse, longtime partner, parent, sibling, grandchild or other significant person, you are welcome. Claire Towle, Clinical Director of Taking Time, will facilitate.

Reserve your spot by calling or emailing the church office at:

(310) 377-6771
churchoffice@rhumc.org

Giving Campaign Update

Thank you! Your response to this year's Celebration Giving Campaign has been wonderful. As of November 30 we had received 169 responses from our church family, with an overall increase of 14% by those who pledged last year. We also have Giving Cards from 46 families for 2024 who did not pledge in the current year. That is a wonderful sign of confidence in our mission and hope for where God is leading us in the coming year. Thank you to all who give so generously to make possible the work in which we share.

You can help us put next year's budget on a healthy footing by filling out a 2024 Giving Card, or by going to the church's web site, www.rhumc.org/giving/pledge and letting us know that you look forward to supporting our life and work in the coming year. Thank you!

RHUMC'S 2024 Winter Supper Club Sign-Ups

- by Co-Chairs Anna Randall & Debbie Taylor

Last year's Winter Supper Club was enjoyed by all who participated and we hope that each of you will start the New Year beginning in January with four months of participation and a new sense of friendship and fellowship by joining us. Consider signing up after the services on December 3 or December 10.

The Winter Supper Club members are adults who enjoy getting to know one another and find that food makes the cordiality even greater.

Meeting once a month starting this January on a four-month rotational basis, the members come together in one another's homes to share a meal with usually 6-7 others from the list. The host (couple or single) selects a date, time and main course. The meal might be a brunch, picnic, BBQ or dinner. The other three participants each provide another portion of the meal (usually salad, vegetable, or dessert.) Each member will be hosting one month and the three additional months will simply bring the assigned dish, a good appetite, and a smile.

We sincerely hope that this announcement is making you hungry to join!

We will be taking sign-ups following Sunday services on December 3 and 10. If you are unable to be at church then please email Anna Randall at annamrandall@gmail.com or call her at 310-541-9681. Your email/call will need to include:

Name (Couple or Single) Address Email Address Phone Number

We are confident that it will be fun and rewarding for all.

Christmas Poinsettias

You are invited to donate one or more poinsettia plants to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas.

Please make checks payable to RHUMC for $20 per plant, or 2 for $30. Place your check in the offering plate or bring or mail this form to the church office. The last day to order plants is December 10. You may also order plants online at rhumc.org.

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: _____

FREE **SUPPORT GROUP** for those caring for a loved one with

Dementia, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's

Wednesday
December 13
10:00-11:00 a.m.
in the Aldersgate Room

Lauren Mahakian

Certified Dementia Practitioner, Speaker
Facilitator/Educator
Certified Validation Therapy
HCO#194700543

The discovery of memory loss can be daunting, yet in our experience, professional guidance and learning from others with similar experiences can be very helpful. Join PV News columnist, certified dementia practitioner, and founder/CEO of Family Connect Memory Care Lauren Mahakian at this community-based gathering of people that share support, tips, and authenticity. Our groups are designed for those caring for a loved one with dementia, Alzheimer's or cognitive decline. All groups are led by Lauren Mahakian and are free of charge. Please contact the church office to RSVP at churchoffice@rhumc.org or call at 310-377-6771.

Club Maintenance Decks the Hall - by Dave Larson

Our next opportunity for CM work will be on **Saturday, December 9,** at 8:30 a.m. and we invite folks to come on out to share in decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas. We will resume normal CM tasks in January.

Altar Flowers

The new flower chart for 2024 has arrived! Sign up early to ensure you get your favorite date to honor, celebrate, or remember that someone special!

Blood Pressure Sundays

Blood pressure screenings are offered on the last Sunday of every month after each service. The morning screenings will be held in the church office conference room and after 3rd service in the Aldersgate room.

Taco Night

No Taco Night in December. Enjoy your New Year's Eve!

Many Thanks!

Hymn Sing

On Monday, November 20, a group of RHUMC choir members hosted a hymn sing at The Canterbury. Thank you Debra Shrader for leading the singing and selecting the hymns. Thank you Ellen Brim, Jackie Showalter, Susan Deo, and Nina Bradbury for your beautiful voices. And finally thank you to Congregational Care Minister Margaret Moretti who inspired the event.

Loving Thy Neighbor: Thanksgiving Service Camp

During Thanksgiving break youth from our church and around the South Bay volunteered to cook a Thanksgiving community feast for Toberman Neighborhood Center. Thanks to the generous donations made to the RHUMC Sunday school and RHUMC Preschool canned food drives, and Mr. Fletcher Larson's pickles sale during Mission Fiesta, we were able to serve 150 folks a hot Thanksgiving meal with all the fixing. Thank you Debra DeLuca, Susan Markee, and Diane Reksc for helping lead our youth!

Malaga Bank had a collection station for food donations to Toberman. We are grateful for the partnership.

CHRISTMAS EVE

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth are invited to participate in the 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service.

Please contact Kristin Sutrave, Youth Ministries Pastor, if you are interested in participating in any of these special activities by emailing her at kristin@rhumc.org or by calling 310-377-6771 ext. 305.

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WORSHIP

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023 @ 4:00 PM
ARRIVE BY 3:00 PM

YOUTH 6TH – 12TH GRADE
Participate in the advent wreath lighting ceremony, play a hand bell piece, read scripture, or play a musical instrument during the prelude (audition required).

HAND BELL PRACTICE SCHEDULE
Friday, 12/1 @ 3:45 - 4:30 PM
Friday, 12/8 @ 3:45 - 4:30 PM

REQUIRED REHEARSAL FOR EVERYONE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16
ARRIVE AT 10:30 OR 11:00 AM
(START TIME DEPENDS ON ROLE.)

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Children are invited to participate in the 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service.

To sign up or get more information please contact Debra DeLuca, Director of Children's Ministries at debra@rhumc.org or call the church office at (310) 377-6771, ext. 306.

Assistance from parents or relatives is helpful.

WORSHIP

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 4:00 PM
ARRIVE BY 3:30 PM
CHILDREN AGES 3 – 5th GRADE

Calling all children to participate in our 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service on December 24, 2023. Please arrive no later than 3:30 pm. Children are invited to portray the holy family, animals, shepherds, angels, and the royal wise ones bringing gifts.

REQUIRED REHEARSAL

SATURDAY, DEC 16TH
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

At the rehearsal, children will be fitted for their costumes and practice their part. December 16 is the ONE REQUIRED REHEARSAL that will secure your child or grandchild a role.

Please bring your children to the Sanctuary to check them in.

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Youth Ministries

Ignite youth Ministry

Wednesday, Dec. 6: **Poinsettias and Carols** 5:00-8:00pm
Youth (and their families/parents) are invited to sign up to help deliver poinsettia plants and sing carols to congregation members. Everyone will return to the church around 7:00pm for dinner. Please RSVP by 12/3 so we can ensure there is enough room for everyone in the cars.

Wednesday, Dec. 13: **Ignite Christmas Party** 6:30-8:00pm
Wear festive Christmas apparel and join us for a Christmas Party. Dinner will be provided. Please note that this is the last Ignite of the year. We will resume with a spring semester kick off on January 31, 2024.

Confirmation

1/21/24 @ 11:15 am Confirmation Information Meeting
Youth in 9th-12th grade are invited to participate in our Confirmation program. Youth will take classes throughout the spring and officially join the church on Confirmation Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Sierra Service Project 2024

We are now accepting registration for SSP 2024
High Schoolers will go to Tsaile, AZ on July 27 - August 4, 2024.

Youth Sunday School

We offer a youth Sunday school class on Sundays during the 10:00am and 5:30pm worship services.

Kristin Sutrave Director of Youth Ministries
Kristin@rhumc.org
Cell Phone: 562-234-0161
Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/RHyouth
Instagram: rhumcyouth_

Children's Ministry

Join us as we learn and build a solid foundation
with Jesus during Sunday School classes each week. Through our Bible stories, music, videos, games and crafts, we will lead your children on a life-long journey of faith.

Our services are at 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

PreK – Kindergarten (potty trained) with Ms. Debra in room #201
1st – 2nd grade with Ms. Natalie in room #205
3rd – 5th grade with Ms. Stevie in room #204
Our nursery is open for children 3 years of age and younger in room #110
with Ms. Michelle and Ms. Clara during our 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. services.

We look forward to seeing you soon!
If you have any questions or would like more information,
please contact Debra at debra@rhumc.org.

Rolling Hills United Methodist Preschool

The preschool enjoyed our "Food Offering and Singing" followed by picnic lunches on the patio just before our Thanksgiving break. The children brought canned goods that were then donated to Toberman. Now that we have returned, we are rehearsing for our annual Christmas programs to be held on December 11, 12 and 13 at noon. The children sing Christmas songs in the 2's and 3's and the 4's all get a part in the beautiful Nativity program. It's a lovely end to the year with holiday spirit and songs to welcome Christmas upon us. Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas from RHUMPS.

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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
Youth Ministry Pastor	Kristin Sutrave	Senior Pastor Emeritus	Martha Rowlett
Music Director	Chuck Dickerson	Organist/Pianist	Althea Waites
3rd Service Music	Paula Kuno	Children's Ministry Dir.	Debra DeLuca
Preschool Director	Myra Ghabrial	Kid Zone Director	Gabby Palacios
Church Office Admin.	Peggy Roulette	Executive Assistant	Catherine Dingman
Treasurer	Wade Welch	& Finance Manager	
		Custodian	Miguel Portillo
Church Office Phone	310-377-6771	Resident Bishop	Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Fax Line	310-544-4123	District Superintendent	Rev. Dr. Siosaia Tu'itahi
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 29
www.rhumc.org