Grace Notes



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"The house lights go off and the footlights come on. Even the chattiest stop chattering as they wait in darkness for the curtain to rise. In the orchestra pit, the violin bows are poised. The conductor has raised the baton.

In the silence of a midwinter dusk, there is far off in the deeps of it somewhere a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen.

You walk up the steps to the front door. The empty windows at either side of it tell you nothing, or almost nothing. For a second you catch a whiff in the air of some fragrance that reminds you of a place you've never been and a time you have no words for. You are aware of the beating of your heart.

The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment."

- Frederick Buechner, Whistling in the Dark

December 2021 • Vol. 220

On Sunday, November 28, we celebrated the First Sunday of Advent. It came early this year. Advent is often referred to as a season of preparation. We ready ourselves, our homes, our church for the coming birth of Jesus. We decorate, we put up the tree, we purchase and wrap gifts, and the list goes on and on. It can be exhausting – we get so wrapped up in the preparations that when December 25^{th} finally arrives, we want to snuggle up next to the baby Jesus in the manger and simply "sleep in heavenly peace.

In the 1970s a major brand ketchup company used Carly Simon's song, "Anticipation," in its television ads. Do you remember those folks waiting, patiently, for the ketchup to finally drip from the glass bottle on to their food of choice? Today, we simply turn the plastic bottle upside down and squeeze, forcing out the ketchup. Even back then we'd try to hurry up the process by shaking the bottle, pounding on the bottom of the bottle, or sticking a knife into the neck of the bottle.

In our hurry-up world, especially as we are emerging from the pandemic, what would it be like for us, this Advent season, to instead of dwelling on the preparations, to focus on what is ahead, be it Christmas, or the new year, with a spirit of anticipation, a spirit of expectation, a spirit of hope.

Another carol proclaims, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." May we live with that anticipation this Advent season.

As Carly sang, "We can never know about the days to come, but we think about them anyway... Anticipation, anticipation."

Peace,

The Christmas Season

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Gingerbread House Event Sunday, December 5 / 5:15-6:00 p.m. & 6:15-7:00 p.m., Assembly Room

Christmas Tree Lighting Sunday, December 5 / 7:00 p.m. In-Person on the Front Lawn

Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 19 / 4:00 p.m. In-Person & via Zoom



Christmas Eve

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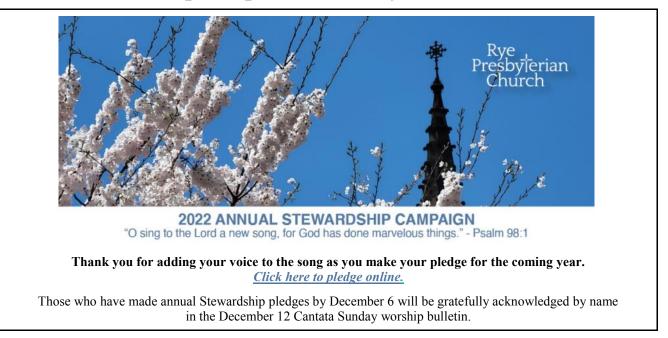
Family Services with Live Nativity & Candlelighting 3:30 p.m.—In-Person only 5:00 p.m.— In -Person & Live-Streamed

> Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols 10:00 p.m. In-Person & Live-Streamed

NOTE: IN-PERSON SERVICES ON CHRISTMAS EVE BY RESERVATION ONLY

Please see the church website (<u>www.ryepc.com</u>) for further information.

Stewardship, Stephen Ministry, Adult Education



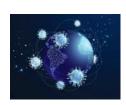


A Perfect Gift

While the "perfect" gift might be discontinued, production lead times pushed back, or package arrivals delayed, there is a gift which transcends physical limitation and demonstrates how much we care about the receiver. To truly listen to another's thoughts, cares, and concerns is a wonderful gift to another person and an essential tool for anyone who provides supportive care. "The first duty of love is to listen," writes theologian Paul Tillich. In Stephen Ministry, a great deal of time is spent teaching and practicing listening skills shared in one-to-one confidential relationships with people experiencing difficulties.

The art of listening is a skill that can be taught and learning how to truly listen will benefit all your caring relationships. If you are interested in learning more about the resources Rye Presbyterian Church provides care givers, please contact one of RPC's pastors or Stephen Ministry Leader Carol Love:

cloveny@optonline.net / 914-536-9893

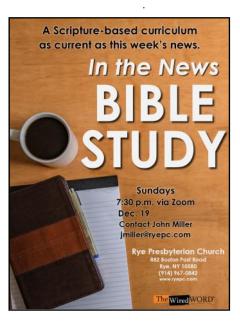


How the Pandemic Has Changed Our World Sunday morning, Dec. 12, 9:00 a.m. Rye Presbyterian Church

A 2020 Pew Research poll asked Americans how the pandemic has affected them. The majority (89%) mentioned at least one negative change in their lives, while a smaller share (though still a 73% majority) mentioned at least one unexpected upside. Most have experienced these events simultaneously.

Join us for the final session on **December 12** as we welcome **Jim Howland**, Managing Director Morgan Stanley, who will talk about the changes in the financial world.





Christmas Joy Offering, Christmas Flowers & Music

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. By supporting the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded. Gifts received in 2020 helped to provide:

- \$1.1 million of gifts from 2020 are being used to provide critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need.
- Income supplements from the BOP helped nearly 299 households, assisting retired church workers, and surviving spouses with the means to provide for themselves.
- Housing supplements from the BOP helped more than 244 households remain in their homes, afford assisted living, or long-term care.
- Emergency Assistance Grants from the BOP helped more than 109 households facing times of great financial need or uncertainty due to unforeseen circumstances.

The PC-USA has a historic commitment to higher learning and has long promoted education and leadership development through the establishment and support of Presbyterianrelated schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Our future church leaders of color can receive much-needed assistance while they discover and pursue their professional goals at these schools and colleges.

- \$1.1 million of gifts from 2020 are being used to provide education and leadership development skills at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.
- Many of the students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color are the first in their families to enroll in higher education.

We offer our gifts during this Advent Season to the Christmas Joy Offering because God shows us the power and importance of being together. We might not be able to meet face to face with those who need the support that our gifts provide, be we are very much still together. We thank God for being "with us" through the gift of Jesus, for opening doors that may not have been accessible to us, and for joining us together as the Church and, through our gifts, with those who have need.

This annual special offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will be received through Sunday, December 19. To donate online, <u>click here</u>.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS & MUSIC

As we have returned to in-person worship services as well as continuing to stream online, this year's Christmas Eve services will include beautiful flowers and music to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We invite you to help defray the cost of our Christmas flowers and music by making a donation.

Your donation can be recognized in the Christmas bulletin in one of two ways:

-As an **acknowledgement** showing only your name (can also include family members' names). We will need to know how you would like your name(s) to be shown.

-As a **dedication** (as we have done in previous years). You will need to provide the following information:

From: _____(how you wish your name shown)

Indicate one of the following dedications:

In Loving Memory of_____

or ... In Gratitude for_____

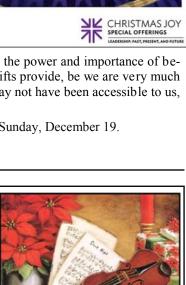
To Pay: Check payable to RPC (indicate Flowers & Music on the memo line), to Rye Presbyterian Church,882 Boston Post Road, Rye, NY 10580

-or Online: https://ryepc.com/article/christmas-flowers-music/

To submit your information: If sending a check, include a note with the information. **If online**, you can enter the information in the notes section of the PayPal form; or, you can email the information to Denise LeVan (<u>dlevan@ryepc.com</u>).

Donations must be received no later than Tuesday, December 14, to be included in the bulletin.

If youh ave questions, please contact (dlevan@ryepc.com).





Events of the Season



Sunday, December 5, at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome the season with carols and dessert around the trees on the front lawn. Please bring a dessert to share!





It's that time when RPC elves gather together to decorate the Sanctuary for the holidays!

Come by on Wednesday, December 1, 11:00 a.m. As usual, there will be food and drink, music, and lots of merriment.

Please contact Ashley Ginnings (<u>ashleytginnings@gmail.com</u>) or Krysta Holland (<u>krysta.holland@gmail.com</u>) if we can count on you this year!



GINGERBREAD HOUSE EVENT - Sunday, December 5

All are welcome to join us for our annual gingerbread house decorating event on Sunday, December 5, in the Assembly Room! This year we are offering two different time slots – 5:15-6:00pm and 6:15:-7:00pm. *Both times are limited to 10 families each*. Masks are required while inside.

Some refreshments will be offered outside during the first time slot as you wait for your gingerbread houses to dry. Following the second time slot, families are welcome to leave their gingerbread houses in the Assembly Room to dry as they join in the tree lighting and desserts on the Front Lawn.

We also have a limited supply of extra gingerbread houses for anyone who would like one but is unable to attend the event. **Please register on our website** (<u>https://ryepc.com/article/gingerbread-houses-december-5/</u>) by Thursday, December 2! If you have any questions, please contact Rev. JP (<u>jmarshall@ryepc.com</u>).







Sunday, December 19, at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

For further information contact Lisa Rawson (lrawson@ryepc.com)

Christian Education, Confirmation



This December we continue our journey through our Sunday School curriculum called **Celebrate Wonder**, which seeks to engage our children's natural sense of wonder and curiosity to help them understand God's love. Through opportunities for reflection, music, engaging activities, and spiritual practices, our children will be given a safe space to ask big questions and help them live into their identities as beloved children of God. Below are the stories we are engaging this month:

Dec. 5:	Luke 1:26-38
	(Mary's Good News)
Dec. 12:	Luke 1:39-66
	(Mary and Elizabeth)
Dec. 19:	Luke 2:1-20 (Jesus' Birth)
Dec. 26:	No Sunday School
	(Christmas weekend)

We invite families to engage these stories together at home. This curriculum comes with its own Take-Home pages that invite families to read, wonder, and pray together. These pages will be sent home with your children every Sunday morning. We will also include these pages in our weekly Christian Ed newsletter. If you would like to receive our newsletter, please contact Rev. JP (jmarshall@ryepc.com).

Middle School Connection

All 6th – 8th graders are welcome at RPC's Connection! Wednesdays, December 1 & 15 5:30-6:45 p.m., Youth Rooms

We'll take time to catch up with one another over pizza, then play some games and reflect on the Advent season together!

Let **Rev JP** (jmarshall@ryepc.com) know if you'd like to be on the parent email list. All updates about Connection gatherings will also be put on the website each month.

We are also keeping the connections going outside of our gatherings through **GroupMe**! If your youth would like to be a part of our group chat, please send **Rev. JP** (<u>jmarshall@ryepc.com</u>) either your youth's cell phone number or email.

High School Youth Group

All 9th – 12th graders are welcome at RPC's High School Youth Group!

- Saturday, December 11, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., The Sharing Shelf (47 Purdy Ave.) Join us as we help The Sharing Shelf sort and fold clothing at their warehouse. Space is limited to 12 youth. If you are interested in helping out that morning, please let Rev. JP (jmarshall@ryepc.com) know.
- Sunday, December 12. 6:00-7:30 p.m., Chapel: Join us for Vespers, where we invite our high school youth to slow down in the midst of all the busyness for a time of intentional connection and prayer! Please let **Rev. JP** (jmarshall@ryepc.com) know beforehand if you plan on joining us for Vespers. Also, if you have a specific concern you would like us to pray for, please feel free to reach out, even if you are unable to attend!
- Sunday, December 19, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Bread of Life Food Pantry (65 Orchard Ave.). Join us as we help Bread of Life prepare pantry bag for local families. We will meet at the pantry at 11:30 a.m., and we should be done by 1:00 pm., so please let **Rev.** JP (<u>imarshall@ryepc.com</u>) know soon if you would like to join.

We are on Instagram: Username: ryepresyouth

Updates through GroupMe! Join our youth group chat for updates and keeping in touch with one another! Pleasse send **Rev. JP** (<u>jmarshall@ryepc.com</u>) either your cell phone number or email.

Confirmation

How did we get here? By the hand of God, or through a long series of random but fortunate mutations? Even then, we have to ask, why are we here? And if God made the world and declared it good, how did it get so far off track? How is God at work trying to mend all this? And how, in the middle of all that life is, do we better connect with that God?

These are the questions that have been on the plate of the confirmation class so far this fall. This month, they will be writing a brief paper on their thoughts (and questions) about all that we have covered so far.

This month we will start our look at Jesus and his role in God's story during our meetings on Sunday afternoons,

December 5 and 12, at either 4:00 or 5:00 p.m.

Confirmation

Midnight Run Saturday, November 13







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Music Notes, Cantata Sunday



Mini Cantata Sunday on December 12

Please plan to attend worship – in person [reservations will be necessary] or online – on December 12, as the choir and instrumentalists will present a "mini" Cantata Sunday. The main work will be a setting of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46b-55), likely by Johann Kerll or Johann Rosenmüller (the piece had been attributed to Dieterich Buxtehude), for choir, soloists, two violins, cello, and organ. In addition, the strings will play movements from trio sonatas by Guiseppe Tartini for the prelude, offering, and postlude.

Resuming Some Normality on Christmas Eve

We're glad to be able to return to some normality for services on Christmas Eve. The 3:30 and 5:00 p.m. family services will be identical, featuring a Live Nativity and Candlelighting. The 5:00 p.m. iteration will be livestreamed; persons wishing to attend live will need to make a reservation (still limited to c. 150 persons each).

Reservations also will be needed to attend in person the 10:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols, with Candlelighting (yes, still limited to c. 150 persons). This service, too, will be livestreamed. Normality will be apparent through the full choir, string quartet, and carol singing (still limited to fully-vaccinated persons). Prelude music will begin at about 9:45, concluding with "O Holy Night" (again, another aspect of normality). Along with the familiar, we will be pleased to present the first offering of an anthem, *Clear Out the Cluttered Heart*, text by Thomas Troeger, composed by church "son" Patrick Cannell to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the sanctuary.

It will be a special evening. Make room in your schedule – and your heart – to welcome the Christ Child anew again!

- Jason



RESERVATION ON-LINE REQUIRED

Worship, Giving

Weekend Worship

As we move into December, we will continue with a single service at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. As we have done since the summer, that service will have limited in-person attendance. In addition, the online option through Zoom and YouTube will continue. As we keep an eye on demand and safety, we will add services as needed - bringing back the Saturday 5:00 p.m. service or an early Sunday service. Please watch your weekly emails for updates!

Online Worship

As mentioned above, live-streamed worship will continue this fall and will become a permanent feature of RPC. The installation of a permanent system in the sanctuary with multiple cameras, more microphones, and an upgraded sound system has been completed. The live feed will be available for now on Zoom and YouTube. But, if you don't have computer capability you can also dial in to hear the service on your phone. That information is in the box below. A special thank-you to the virtual worship crew, the Worship & Music committee, and the in-person usher corps for working so hard to make worship in the Covid-19 era go so smoothly!

Worship in the Sanctuary **In Person GUIDELINES**

As promised, we continue to evaluate and adjust our policies as circumstances and guidelines change. Because of the increased incidence of COVID infections in Westchester County at this time, we have modified our mask policy:

• Masks are required for all unvaccinated people and are highly recommended for the vaccinated.

Other than the masking change, our previous guidelines remain. For the full current update on Worship Guidelines, click: https:// ryepc.com/article/updated-worship-guidelines-august-2021/).

Sunday Services also Online via Live Stream!

Bulletin and instructions on joining via Zoom or YouTube are on the church website: ryepc.com/worship/worship-at-rpc/

Instructions on joining by Zoom and other platforms are on the church website: rvepc.com/worship/worship-at-rpc/

Bulletins will also be available there.

DIAL IN TO SUNDAY WORSHIP!

To attend worship by using your phone, call 1-646-558-8656 then enter this Meeting ID: 560 770 303



Online donation options are available on the RPC Website Giving page.

To access, go to ryepc.com/give or scan the QR Code to the right with your cell phone.

Please contact Maida Robinson: mrobinson@ryepc.com if you have any questions or need assistance.



YOUR CHARITABLE DEDUCTION

As 2021 comes to an end, please Gifts of stock to RPC are cleared received by December 31 to qualify for a charitable deduction in the 2021 tax vear.

As you make your year-end gifts to the church, please note the purpose in the memo line or on the envelope-Annual Giving or Christmas Joy Offering. Separate checks for gifts are appreciated.

PLEDGE BALANCE

If you would like to check your annual giving and Imagine balance online through Access ACS, here: https:// ryepc.com/about-rpc/member-login/

DONATING STOCK TO RPC

keep in mind the church financial through Janney Montgomery Scott LLC records will close on Friday, Dec. 31, DTC #0374. For further credit to Rye 2021, at noon. All checks must be Presbyterian Church Acct. #8926-9870. It is helpful as well to note that the church's legal name is the Presbyterian Church in the Town of Rye, and our tax ID is 13-1740299. If you have questions or a problem, contact Geoff Beringer at:

Janney Montgomery Scott The Beringer Weinstock Group 800 Post Rd., Darien, CT 06820 Tel: 203-662-6360

To insure that your donation is accurately recorded at RPC, please also forward a copy of your letter of instruction to:

Maida Robinson mrobinson@ryepc.com.

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Feeding Westchester



Sunday, November 7

Thank you again for a wonderful project on Sunday. The bags were counted, weighed, and assigned this morning. There were a total of 1,016 bags totaling 890 pounds of food. They will be sent out this week to the Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club and to 2 different senior housing sites in Yonkers. The seniors are particularly thrilled to receive oatmeal. Thank you, thank you for a wonderful event and for continuing to think of Feeding Westchester. -Jeanne Fogel, Feeding Westchester











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Bible Studies, Meetings

BIBLE STUDIES

Men's Bible Study

Sunday, December 12,

8:00 p.m. in the Library with Zoom option

We are on to the book of Acts! Contact Dan Love, <u>dlove@ryepc.com</u>, if you'd like to be on the email reminder list and a part of our study.

Monday Morning Bible Discussion

Every Monday

9:30 a.m., via Zoom

Mondays throughout the month at 9:30 a.m., on Zoom. Our reading of the Gospel according to Luke continues, and all are welcome to join in! Contact Dan, <u>dlove@ryepc.com</u>, if you'd like to be on the email reminder list.

Women's Bible Study

Saturday, December 4, 11, 10:00 a.m., via Zoom For further information, contact Cynthia De Santis (cynthialwells@gmail.com)

Women's Discipleship Group

Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m., RPC Library and Zoom TBD

Current Study: *Faith and Fire, Elijah* by Priscilla Shirer. Info: Alicia Baldwin (<u>Alicia.baldwin@verizon.net</u>) or Courtney Bennett (Courtneybennett910@gmail.com)



In Memoriam

Recent Passings in our Church Community

Ann Cowan Leverich, November 8, Mother of Margaret Blum

George Darius Cobbins, November 10, Father of Maida Robinson

Morgan Patrick Kaplan, November 18, son of Tara and Laurence Kaplan



Painting the RPC trim before winter arrives.

DECEMBER

Church Office Closed on Monday and Tuesday, December 27-28, in observance of Christmas

Board Meetings

Deacons: Wednesday, Dec. 7, 7:00 p.m., Love Manse **Trustees:** Tuesday, Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., Westminster & Zoom **Session:** Wednesday, Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m., Westminster Room **Bible Studies**

- Men's Bible Study: Sunday, Dec. 12, 8:00 p.m., Library with Zoom option
- Monday Morning Bible Discussion: Every Monday, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom
- Women's Bible Study: Saturdays, Dec. 4 & 11, 10:00 a.m., via Zoom
- Women's Discipleship: Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m., Library Adult Education

-How the Pandemic Has Changed Our World: Sunday morning, 9:00 a.m., Dec. 12, Westminster Room

-In the News: Sunday evening, 7:30 p.m., Dec. 19, via Zoom;

- contact John Miller, <u>jmiller@ryepc.com</u>, for Zoom info Youth
- **Confirmation:** Sundays, Dec. 5 & 12, at 4:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m., Westminster Room
- Connection: Wednesday, Dec. 1 & 15, 5:30 p.m., Youth Rooms

High School Youth Group:

-Saturday, Dec. 11, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Sharing Shelf -Sunday, Dec. 12 & 19, 6:00 p.m., Vespers, Chapel -Sunday, Dec. 19, 1:00 p.m., Bread of Life Food Pantry

Music

- **Chancel Choir:** Meet 9:15 a.m., sing at 10:00 a.m. service, rehearsal following service (11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)
- Live Nativity Rehearsal: Sunday, Dec.12, 11:00 a.m., Westminster Room

Pageant Rehearsal: Thursday, Dec. 9, 2:00 & 3:45 p.m., Assembly Room

Pageant Dress Rehearsal: Thursday Dec.16, Sanctuary, Assembly Room, Westminster Room

Other Church Meetings

Cantata Sunday: Sunday, Dec. 12, 10:00 a.m. Worship Christmas Pageant: Sunday, Dec. 19, Sanctuary, 4:00 p.m. Gingerbread House Event: Sunday Dec. 5, Assembly Room Greening of Kirk: Wednesday, Dec. 1, 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary Mission & Outreach: Wednesday, Dec. 1, 6:00 p.m., via Zoom Stephen Leaders: Monday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m., via Zoom -Even Stephens: Monday, Dec. 6, 5:00 p.m., via Zoom -Prime Ministers: Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom 3Ts: Tuesday, 9:50 a.m., Dec.21, via Zoom Contact Jane Mickatavage (914-967-8622) or Nancy Steed (914-328-9658).

Thrift Shop: Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Assembly Room. *Note:* Donations taken on limited basis. Email ryethrift10580@gmail.com for updates.

Tree-Lighting: Sunday, Dec. 5, 7:00 p.m., Front Lawn

Rye Presbyterian Nursery School

Greetings to the RPC Community from Kristin Bassett Kumar

Last month, RPNS hosted Family Movie Night on the Great Lawn! Families enjoyed delicious dinner from two food trucks and children participated in a dance party with glow sticks before the movie began. Once it was dark, we watched the movie SING on the big screen! Movie snacks and donuts with warm apple cider were an added treat! It was so wonderful to have family events back at RPNS and a great time was











<u>The Rev. Daniel Love, Co-Pastor</u> <u>The Rev. Dr. John Miller, Co-Pastor</u> <u>The Rev. Jean-Paul Marshall, Associate Pastor for Christian Education</u> <u>Jason Charneski, Director of Music and Organist</u> <u>Lisa Rawson, Director of Choirs for Children and Youth</u> Theodore Cheng, Knock Intern in Sacred Music <u>Maida Robinson, Chief Administrative Officer</u> <u>Peggy Berretta, Administrative Assistant</u> <u>Denise LeVan, Pastoral Assistant</u> <u>Juan Velasquez, Head Sexton/Building Manager</u> Alonso Osorio, Sunday Sexton

Rye Presbyterian Church 882 Boston Post Road, Rye, New York 10580 / Tel: 914.967.0842 / <u>www.ryepc.com</u>