

# Rock Spring News



## The Gifts of the Season

Worship, sing, and celebrate with us at Rock Spring during Advent and Christmas! On the four Sundays of Advent, Kathy and Laura will preach on The Gifts of the Season: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Our Sanctuary will reflect the simple beauty of the season. Our youth will continue their tradition of being "Secret Santas" to the families at Shelter House. Our choir will present their annual Christmas Concert. Our children will be engaged with Luke's version of the Christmas story. And throughout the season, we will continue to walk with those who are ill, lonely, or grieving. Join us as often as you can: give yourself the gift of receiving the true gifts of the season.

### **Christmas Eve** **Thursday, December 24**

**4:30 p.m.**

*Service of Angels & Shepherds with the Choristers  
(most appropriate for families with young children;  
nursery care available)*

**8:00 p.m.**

*Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols  
with the Youth and Sanctuary Choirs  
(nursery care available)*

**10:00 p.m.**

*Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols with Communion*

## Special Events

**November 29**  
*Fifth Sundays:*  
*Advent in Action*  
12:15 p.m.

**December 4**  
*Advent Music & Meditation*  
6:40 – 7:30 p.m.

**December 13**  
*Open House*  
*at The Parsonage*  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

*Choir Christmas Concert*  
*The Messiah*  
4:00 p.m.

**December 21**  
*The Longest Night Worship*  
7:00 p.m.

**December 27**  
*Christmas Hymn Sing*  
*One Worship Service*  
10:00 a.m.



ROCK SPRING

# Sundays in December

## WEEKLY

9:00 a.m. Worship  
10:00 a.m. Adult Discussion Video Series  
10:00 a.m. Faith + Life (see page 7 for details)  
10:00 a.m. Sanctuary Choir  
10:15 a.m. Choristers  
11:00 a.m. Worship & Sunday School  
12:10 p.m. Youth Choir  
6:30 p.m. Middle & Senior High Youth of Rock Spring (YoRS)

## DECEMBER 6

### Second Sunday of Advent

12:15 7th/8th Grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) Parent Meeting

## DECEMBER 13

### Third Sunday of Advent

2:00 p.m. Open House at the Parsonage  
4:00 p.m. Choir Christmas Concert: *Handel's Messiah*

## DECEMBER 20

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

12:30 p.m. Prayer Circle

## DECEMBER 27

### First Sunday After Christmas

10:00 a.m. One Worship Service – Christmas Hymn Sing  
2:00 p.m. Handmade Ministry

# Reflections

*"It is only together as the Body of Christ that we can hope to find healing, reconciliation, and genuine and lasting peace."  
~The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori*

In the days since the Paris attacks, we can feel tension and fear mounting in this country and around the world. We hear people making claims and assumptions, acting from an understandable place of fear, paranoia, and desire for revenge. Our Muslim brothers and sisters are victims of sweeping accusations and there is swelling resistance, in the name of security, to extend help to innocent and vulnerable refugees. World leaders including the Pope, French President François Hollande, and US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter have declared that we are now in a state of war.

It is times like this when I am thankful for the Church. It is times like these when I know that I can't be a Christian without the Church. It takes courage and much intention to act in ways, as individuals and as a nation, that are consistent with our faith and values. I take



comfort from being a part of a community that points us toward a radically different way of life from the path we typically see broadcast on the news.

It is a rigorous spiritual discipline to remain committed to acting with compassion, forgiveness, and peaceful paths to justice when we are afraid. It is a spiritual discipline that cannot be exercised alone; it can only be lived through community. I am grateful that I have you as partners who seek to live out our faith in our families, in our church, in the world.

On the first Sunday of Advent we will talk about hope as being a gift of the season. Advent is the rebirth of hope. It is the hope that there can be a better world. It is the hope that God is indeed with us and among us. That together, with God, we can find a better way.

Grace and peace,  
— *Kathy*



# From Council

## Proud To Be A Rock Springer

Several times over the past few weeks I have heard or seen someone say something along the lines of “I feel so proud to be a Rock Springer.” The majority of this recent batch of comments has come in the context of our continuing sacred conversation on racial justice, or feeling energized by their sense that Rock Spring has “taken a stand.” I can understand that, and personally share that view.

I also understand that there are others in the congregation who do not feel quite the same—perhaps believing that this is not the issue that we should embrace, or the approach is not right, or more broadly that the spheres of faith and social activism should be kept separate. Yet what is striking is that despite those reservations, my sense is that they too are proud or pleased to be Rock Springers.

One reason that we are able to “give and take” on this issue, and many, many others, became a little clearer to me when we welcomed new members in November. As Kathy introduced the “questions” posed to the new members, she observed that at Rock Spring we do not insist on adherence to a specific creed or set of doctrines. I also hear an explanation in the words of welcome—we hear them every week, and perhaps they just wash over us: “Whoever you are, wherever you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” Listening, really listening, to those words, and knowing them to be central to Rock Spring’s culture, defines who we are much more than any single activity or “issue.”

That’s what makes me proud to be a Rock Springer.

One more thing! Those inclusive words of welcome have always been true at Rock Spring...in an intellectual sense. Practically speaking, I think we are progressively getting better and better at conveying our welcome, at connecting with each other. Continuing that progress is something that we can all do and in which we can all take pride.

Grace and Peace,  
– *Michael Bell, Chair*  
[council@rockspringucc.org](mailto:council@rockspringucc.org)



## Nominating Committee Update

As the leaves fall and the temperatures drop, many of us seek out warmth, light, and joyful company. Where better to find it than Rock Spring? We are a community of volunteers who support each other year-round. Our values say it all – we are **inclusive, caring, generous, joyful** and **faith-filled**, and we are always **learning** and **seeking justice** for all people.

Whether you’ve never served on a committee or board, or whether you’ve participated many times before, we hope you’ll think about how you can offer your time and talent to help Rock Spring and our community. Do you get excited about making sure everything has a proper place? Consider Property, Audit, or Finance! Have you been wondering what it would be like to serve communion? The Deacons would welcome you! Do you love to learn and help others learn? Join the Christian Education Board! And if you hanker to reach out to the wider community, then Social Action & Mission has a place for you!

Please consider nominating yourself or someone else to serve on one of our boards by contacting Joanne Kelly, Michael Bell, or Kathy Dwyer. Everyone has something to offer our community! Thank you for helping Rock Spring be a strong, vibrant, inclusive community!

# From Council

## Campus Renewal Committee Progress

During the month of November, the CRC and its subcommittees have been assessing the 50% complete Schematic Design received from Cox Graae & Spack and identifying issues that needed to be raised with the architects before they complete the Schematic Design.



- The Environmental Stewardship Subcommittee Chairperson, Chris Keefer, has continued his examination of whether solar panels make economic sense for Rock Spring. After a lengthy conversation with Adam Prill, our Project Manager from Artisan Partners, Chris and the subcommittee concluded that without better tax incentives from the State of Virginia, it was not cost-effective to proceed with solar panels at this time. Whereas the District of Columbia and Maryland offer varying tax incentives that make these panels cost-effective for entities in those jurisdictions, Virginia has not followed suit. In addition, the Renewable Portfolio Standard requirements for Virginia utilities are voluntary, not mandatory, which creates little incentive for public utilities to create favorable renewable energy programs.
- Adam Prill, Peter Geiger, and Organ Subcommittee members met with J.R. Neutel, President of the Reuters Organ Company. Discussion focused on the façade and electrical changes that will have to be made in the organ chamber. After lengthy conversations about the façade, all have agreed on a design. A rendering of the new façade is below, and a larger version is available for everyone to see in the Saegmuller Room. Pertaining to the construction of the organ itself, we have submitted a second installment payment to Reuters as required by our contractual agreement. Reuters has begun building the pipes and the console for the new organ.
- Over the past month the A/V, IT, and Security Subcommittee and Adam Prill have met and have had a number of e-mail discussions concerning the A/V and IT infrastructure and systems. Adam Prill will lead in the organization, scheduling, direction and technical advice. We are very appreciative of the work Joe Kelly has done on a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Rock Spring IT which included a campus wide calculation of needed IT ports and power outlets. Adam Prill is in the process of putting together the A/V RFP. These documents will be used to request pricing from various installer and suppliers.
- The Library Subcommittee has also been working with the architects and Adam Prill to revise the design of the new library space. Adam, Karin Croft, and Library Subcommittee members met to discuss current library capacity, facilities and equipment, outline requirements/desires for new space, and review current architectural plans.

If you have any questions or comments, please address them to: [campusrenewal@RockSpringUCC.org](mailto:campusrenewal@RockSpringUCC.org).

– *Peter Geiger*  
Campus Renewal Project Chairman



# Worship and Music



## Music & Meditation

**Friday, December 4, 6:40 p.m.**

December's "Music and Meditation" will offer meditative worship with candles, song, and silence – and with some new elements for Advent. Come and be with us as we create a sanctuary time amid the noise of the season. The service on Friday, December 4 will begin at 6:40 with an optional extended prelude and set-up, then move into shared time together in song, prayer, and silence and from 7:00-7:30 p.m. There will be NO service on Friday, January 1.



## Choir Christmas Concert

**Sunday, December 13, 4:00 p.m.**

What are the people in this photo singing?

Clue: It's by G.F. Handel, begins with an "M" and rhymes with pariah!

Please come and join us for our annual Christmas Concert. This is a come-along and sing or come-along and listen kinda concert! You can join us in singing the choruses, or, just sit back and enjoy the choir's hard work! Excellent soloists will also be featured. Musical scores will be available to borrow. Your admission "ticket" is a non-perishable item for the Arlington Food Assistance Center.



## The Longest Night

**Monday, December 21, 4:00 p.m.**

Join us for "The Longest Night," an Advent worship service that acknowledges the long nights in our lives and in our world, and anticipates the turning toward more light that comes with the seasons' movement. Vocalist and musician Ryan Walker will offer the music for the service. If you would like to be involved in the service (reading, joining Ryan in music, setting up the Sanctuary) please contact Laura Martin.



## Poinsettia Dedications

A Rock Spring tradition is to decorate the Sanctuary with flowers for Christmas. Please come by the table after the 9:00 or 11:00 a.m. service to make a donation in any amount and a dedication. The deadline for dedications is December 15. The dedications will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Please make checks payable to Rock Spring Congregational UCC, and write "Christmas Flowers" in memo line. Donors may take the flowers after the last Christmas Eve service or after the December 27 service. Remaining flowers will be delivered to Rock Springers who could not attend. Contact Richard Lee, [rjleeva@gmail.com](mailto:rjleeva@gmail.com) or 703-521-0163, with any questions.



## Christmas Hymn Sing

**Sunday, December 27, 10:00 a.m.**

Get ready to raise your hand and request your favorite Christmas Hymn at our ONE worship service on the Sunday after Christmas. In place of a sermon, we'll make a joyful noise together, singing the Christmas carols of the congregation's choosing. There will be no Sunday school so that all can join in the singing; the nursery will be available.

# Faith Formation

## From the Director of Faith Formation



I find myself on the verge of tears a lot these days. The world seems so dark and we all seem so vulnerable. The news of the past week – from Paris, Beirut, Nigeria, Mali to name a few – overwhelms me. The incomprehensible responses from some – to close our borders to refugees or apply some sort of religious litmus test – dishearten and exhaust me. Sometimes the only rational answer seems to be to crawl back

into my bed and pull the covers over my head.

But I can't. And I don't really want to. I want help. But how?

I am small and surrounded by big and seemingly insurmountable problems. I can't wave my wand and bring about world peace. I can't wave my wand and level the playing field, ending systemic injustices and adjusting attitudes.

Perhaps most simply, I can try to put kindness and positive energy into the world every day. It's not heroic, but it helps. To that end, I've printed out this "Random Acts of Christmas Kindness" Advent Calendar (<http://bit.ly/adventkindness>) for my family to use this month.

Will we save the world? No. But we will help to counter some of the darkness and bring some much-needed light into our little corner of the world. And like most small actions, when added together with the small actions of others, they really can change the world.



May you find light in the darkness this season,

— Ashley



## Faith + Life

Sunday Mornings, 10:00 a.m., Upper Neighborhood House

Join Rock Spring's newest Adult Education offering: Faith + Life. This series of workshops meets on the Neighborhood House stage each week at 10:00 a.m. to explore the various ways our faith intersects with daily life. Come every week, or drop in when a topic grabs your attention. The gatherings are informal and include time for questions and discussion. Childcare is available in the nursery, and elementary students can be escorted to Choristers at 10:15 a.m.

- December 6 – Where is God In... The Developing World? Join Steve Radelet to discuss his newly published book, *The Great Surge: the Ascent of the Developing World*. Hear his thoughts about the tremendous progress being made in addressing poverty and disease, as well as the work that remains to be done. Moderated by Jim Kane.
- December 13 – Family Matters: Digital Parenting Learn how you can model appropriate behavior and serve as a mentor in an ever-changing digital world where children continuously discover and explore new ways of interacting, gathering information, and communicating, and where we adults often struggle to keep up. Moderated by Marti Weston.
- December 20 – Going Deeper: Christmas Carols As December Muzak is filled with the songs of Christmas, which lyrics actually resonate with you? Sara Fitzgerald leads a discussion about the music we sing at this time of year and the interesting back stories that may make some of those songs even more meaningful for us.
- NO CLASS Dec. 27 or Jan. 3

# Faith Formation

## YoRS (Youth of Rock Spring): Doing For Others December

No-Stress November was a big success for YoRS! The youth shared deeply about the stressors in their lives – from bullying, to school pressures, to navigating family challenges. And they explored healthy ways to deal with those stressors – from yoga, to humor, to coloring, to serving others. A new project for the Senior High was baking cookies and making care packages to send to Rock Spring's first-year college students. The packages were well received! And the Middlers took on a huge challenge: repacking 500 pounds of pinto beans into family-size servings for Arlington Food Assistance Center. They did it!



During December, we'll continue our "doing for others" theme by shopping for "Secret Santa" gifts for families living at Shelter House, making wrapping paper for those gifts, and cooking a meal for the day laborers at the Shirlington Employment and Education Center. We'll also have lots of time for fellowship, sharing, praying, and playing.

## Bible Basics: Apocolypse Now & Then

### A Study of the Book of Revelation

The Bible Basics class continues on Friday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 205 of the Hunter Building. This month, we will explore Chapters 8-11, which includes the sounding of the seven trumpets. What will be revealed to us? Come and find out!



## Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education

### 7th/8th Grade Class Begins in January

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive sexuality education program that helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their relationships, health, and behavior in the context of their faith. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Beyond providing facts about anatomy and human development, OWL helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of sexuality.



Rock Spring will offer the class in 2016 for students in 7th & 8th grades. Parent information meetings will be held on Sunday, Dec. 6 at 12:15 p.m. and Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 7:30 p.m. to allow parents to learn more about the program and meet the instructors, Iris Gibson and Jason Henderson. The class will meet Sundays from 5:00-6:30 p.m. from Jan. 10 - May 22. All 7th & 8th grade families will receive more detailed information about the program from Ashley Martinage the first week of December.



## Advent Paper Chains for Families

Each Rock Spring Sunday School family will be receiving a packet with a special Advent paper chain activity that includes a simple daily faith practice. Created by Traci Smith, the author of *Seamless Faith*, we hope this activity will help families to carve out a few minutes each day to focus on the meaning of the season. Extra paper chain packets are available in the Saegmuller Room or from Ashley – pick one up to share with grandchildren or neighbors.

# Social Action and Mission



## Help Make Someone's Holiday Brighter

Join us in supporting our community partners in the month of December! There are many other ways to engage this season. Feel free to discuss what you are looking for with Laura Martin and she will match you with the right community partner. Here are a few ways to help:

- We have gift tags for Shelter House, ASPAN, Culpepper Garden, and AFAC on our Christmas Gift tree, and we invite you to take one or many and grant our partners' Christmas wishes! AFAC is asking for cooking oil, which they particularly need this time of the year. Culpepper Garden is looking for items for welcome bags for new residents. The residents of this senior housing complex have low incomes, and appreciate being welcomed into their new home with some basic items to help them get started. Shelter House and ASPAN tags support homeless families and individuals with what they will need to rebuild their lives out of homelessness – and a few fun things too, to make the season more joyful!
- Rock Springers will be cooking lunch for the Safe Haven homeless lunch program on December 31 at First Christian Church from approximately 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., and welcome others from the congregation or visitors/friends to join in!
- Another opportunity is at Culpepper Garden on Sunday, Dec. 20, from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. during the "Family Feast," an event that allows Culpepper residents to "host" family and friends for a holiday meal and celebration. Volunteers are needed to assist the residents and family during their meal service: carrying plates from the buffet to the assigned dining table, filling beverages, serving dessert, removing dirty plates, and resetting for next service. Each volunteer will be assigned to work alongside one of Culpepper's seasoned staff members who will guide them through the day. Please contact Assistant Dining Services Director, Franziska Rodewald at [FRodewald@culpeppergarden.org](mailto:FRodewald@culpeppergarden.org) if you can help.

## Meals on Wheels Delivery Teams

Due to some recent retirements, we are in need of three drivers to join the Rock Spring team making deliveries for Meals on Wheels in Arlington. The routes usually take an hour to an hour and a half, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Although we are looking for people who will be able to work once a month, if you are ill or out of town, a substitute can easily be arranged.

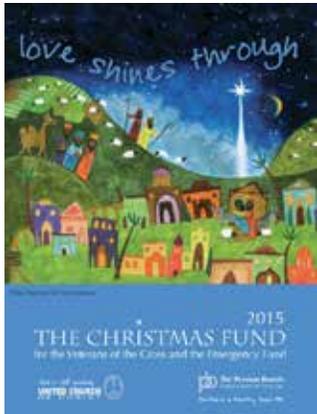


Rock Spring has had a long-term commitment to providing volunteer drivers for Meals on Wheels. Working in teams of two, Rock Springers are responsible for five MOW routes on the first and third Fridays of each month. We deliver a hot lunch and a bag dinner plus drinks to homebound individuals who are unable to shop for or prepare meals for themselves. In total, Rock Springers deliver over 1500 meals per year. For more information or to volunteer, contact Lisa Trangsrud: 703-534-3119 or [LTrangsrud@hotmail.com](mailto:LTrangsrud@hotmail.com).

# Social Action and Mission

## The Christmas Fund

Rock Spring will joyfully receive contributions to The Christmas Fund on Christmas Eve, as well as any time in December when offerings are designated to the Fund.



How much do you know about The Christmas Fund? It is a UCC fund that provides direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees in times of need. Here is one story, that of the Rev. Dr. Beverly Weinholt. "In 1997, my life was turned upside down in a moment." Married for 20 years with teenage twin daughters, Beverly suddenly found herself alone and financially vulnerable. "By the grace of God, I was hired as a part-time lay minister of a United Church of Christ congregation. Witnessing to God's call in my life, I was urged to pursue ordination." Graduating from Andover Newton Theological School in 2000, Beverly pastored four churches and team-taught boundary awareness training for clergy. Relocating from Massachusetts to Kentucky in 2008, Beverly was discerning a coalescing call to combine theology and psychology. A board-certified and licensed clinical counselor before her marriage, she realized that not only could unhealthy boundaries compromise clergy, but they can also create conflict in church communities.

Wanting to write a curriculum for churches on this subject, Beverly did doctoral work at Louisville Seminary, graduating in 2011 with a D.Min. in Pastoral Counseling. She retired from pastoral ministry to pursue clinical practice, specializing in adult survivors of abuse. Diagnosed with mononucleosis at 66 and exhausted from recovery, Beverly contracted a serious bacterial infection that kept recurring and forced her to downsize her work to part-time. It was then that the Pension Boards' Christmas Fund stepped in to supplement Beverly's pension and Medicare premium. "Words are wanting when I try to express what this meant to me. A solo person with nowhere to turn, I didn't expect such generosity. But because of this gift arising out of United Church of Christ congregations, I have been able to make ends meet. Beyond money, your partnership has given me dignity to see myself as more than my problem." Beverly reflects on the support offered to her: "A mentor of mine said, 'most pastors I know have crosses to bear.' We all do. That's why Christ calls us to 'take up your cross and follow me.' But thanks be to God for faithful partners on the way that, in the words of the American writer Margaret Wheatley, are 'brave enough to bear witness and turn toward and not away from our struggles.' This counterintuitive move made all the difference to me. It brought beauty from brokenness. And by God's grace, I bring it to others who sit in dark places."

## Rock Spring In the News

Rock Spring continues its long commitment to bearing witness on a number of issues of social justice – and people are noticing!



The T-Shirt Memorial to Victims of Gun Violence attracted the attention of many. Numerous people walked through the display, many who pulled over while driving by. An article appeared in the Arlington Connection newspaper (<http://bit.ly/RSgunmemorial>), which attracted the attention of the Voice of America news service. Reporter June Soh spent a Sunday morning at Rock Spring, which resulted in this story (<http://bit.ly/RSvoa>).

Our Sacred Conversation on Racial Justice is also being noticed, in part due to the banner on our front lawn. The banner was defaced in mid-November and replaced, accompanied by a letter of invitation into the conversation from Kathy Dwyer. You can read coverage of these events here <http://bit.ly/RSbanner> and here <http://bit.ly/RSbannerRNS>.

# Congregational Life



## From the Director of Mission Integration & Congregational Care

My favorite time of the day is before the world wakes up. I relish getting up early and having coffee and spending time in silence, reflection, and prayer. These early mornings are when I connect and reconnect with what can only be heard sans words. This is when I meet what I have been avoiding, and receive the sacred disruption of encounter. Or this is when joy finds me again, in surprise and unrestrained delight, like a dog greeting me at the door of my life. These times have been steadiness to me in all seasons. Often the morning time includes writing poetry, as I feel words fall toward me. In this season of Advent's anticipation, shadows, and awaiting Light, I wanted to share some of my poems that have been part of my journey, in hopes that they may draw light for you.

In gratitude and joy,  
—*Laura*

### ***Star-Found***

This is the promise of the star-found Baby:  
Beauty weighs more than devastation in the end.  
Devastation may get ahead for a while,  
Thanks to shoddy accounting practices and a solid marketing plan.  
But in the end, the power holds in the beauty that spins itself out for the life of the world.

So I will throw my life in  
With those who follow stars  
To unlikely places,  
Who practice living their hope,  
Who stop in a silent night to whisper thank you  
And hold hands with the one walking alongside.

### ***For all of today's Marys***

Do their souls magnify the Lord  
In refugee camps  
and slums  
and places where the grey wolf of violence slashes through the night?

Do they believe that the world can shift,  
however slightly,  
with this love-formed one they hold?

Do they sing remembered promises—  
lullabies of mercy and assurance—  
to the tiny one falling asleep against them?

Do they dance together  
after the lights flicker out,  
while explosions punctuate the night?

Do they think of the prince of peace  
coming into the world in his own humble estate  
in a time of war?

And do they sing to their babies,  
"All generations will call me blessed"  
as a man groans in pain  
and a child screams?

### ***No Wilderness***

Beloved, this is no wilderness.  
This is the beginning of the road that will take you home.  
Remember the languages that I created you to speak.  
Remember the stillness that was there even in the thrust of creation.  
Remember the light-hewn seeds of the eternal that rest inside you.  
Beloved, this is no wilderness.  
This is me coming alongside you.  
Remember the exile and the pain.  
Remember the syncopations of hope that found you in fleeting moments even then.  
Remember that this was my echo coming to you.  
Beloved, this is no wilderness.  
You are not lost.  
You are walking to your belonging-place,  
And I am here,  
Blessing you.

# Congregational Life



## New & Heritage Members

On Sunday, November 15, Rock Spring welcomed four people into membership and also celebrated our more than 30 "Heritage Members" – individuals who have been members of Rock Spring for 40 years or more.



**Diana Maxwell** grew up on a dairy farm in Geneseo, New York (near Rochester) and studied at Cornell University before coming to DC for graduate school. Diana now works as Grants Manager at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In her spare time she likes to bake, watch movies, hang out with her friends, nieces and nephews, and sing. She was very active in a UCC church while growing up and joins Rock Spring with a desire to have a church family as an adult.

**Mary Sue Fields** has three daughters: Rosemary (age 14), Sophia (8), Catherine Grace (5), The four of them, along with Mary Sue's mother, returned to Arlington, Virginia in August 2015 after more than 13 years of government service abroad. A career Foreign Service Officer since 2002, Mary Sue has served in Guadalajara, Mexico; Beijing and Chengdu, China; Taipei, Taiwan; and Santiago, Chile, primarily in roles related to press and cultural affairs and educational exchange. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she worked for several years in Arlington as a curriculum development and training specialist at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute/School of Language Studies, and taught French, English and Spanish for ten years in central and southwestern Virginia and in southern France. She grew up in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Lebanon, Virginia, a small town in southwest Virginia. Of Rock Spring, Mary Sue writes, "We've only been back a few months but have already fallen in love with Rock Spring, especially the congregation's welcoming spirit and the church's commitment to social justice and global missions. The girls have fallen in love with the Sunday school and spiritual formation programs (and, of course, the wonderful climbing tree adjacent to the playground)."



**Chris and Katie Mooshian**, parents to Will, David, and Charlie, are joining Rock Spring because they feel as though there is a place here for everyone in the family and they appreciate the pairing of progressive theology with traditional worship. Chris enjoys hiking, coaching his children's sports teams, and reading history. He says, "there is nothing better than drinking a microbrew, kicking the ball around in the yard with my boys, while listening to Frank Sinatra." Katie is passionate about volunteer work; currently, she is involved with La Leche League and Mended Little Hearts. She loves to spend time discovering the forest with her boys, yoga, and sitting by herself in a quiet house.

**Heritage Sunday** has become an annual tradition of honoring those members of Rock Spring who have been leaders of our congregation for many years, to thank them for their ongoing sharing of their wisdom and values. Pictured here are some of those who were able to join us. Kathy is pictured with **Caroline Hufford Anderson** who created the cross that hangs in our sanctuary and inspired our church logo. Also pictured are **Steve Emory**, **Bill Bozman**, **Charlene Bickford**, and **Pam Henriksen**.



# Congregational Life



## Share Your Gifts with Rock Spring's Caring Ministries

Contact Laura Martin for more information about any of these opportunities. She will direct you to the right person!

- **CARDS:** Join in writing cards to members and friends of Rock Spring who cannot attend church or are experiencing grief, illness, or a special joy in their life. This is a powerful way to connect and reach others, and can be done at your convenience.
- **FLOWERS:** Do you love arranging flowers, or surprising people with a delivery? Consider being part of the flower ministry, taking altar arrangements and other flowers to people in the congregation who would love a bouquet! Larger arrangements can be made into smaller displays; other arrangements can be taken directly from the altar and delivered.
- **FOOD IN A FLASH:** Often needs for meals or other food may arise on short notice. We welcome individuals or small groups to cook meals that could be frozen and kept at the church to be delivered when there's a need. We also like to keep a supply of frozen breads and cookies that can be delivered/given as needed.
- **MEAL MAKERS:** Families and individuals at Rock Spring love to receive care in the form of food, especially when they are struggling with a serious illness or major transition in their life! Lists of specific needs are regularly shared with the congregation. We often use the "Take Them a Meal" website to schedule ongoing meal support.
- **PRAYER LETTER:** If you would like to receive a monthly letter of prayer requests, you can be added to our mailing. The letter conveys prayer requests from members of the congregation who've asked for them to be shared. Recipients of the prayer letter are encouraged to pray for those listed daily, weekly, or as the spirit moves them.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Support members and friends of Rock Spring in getting to church, medical appointments, and/or grocery shopping. Flexible based on your availability and interest.
- **VISITATION:** Cultivate an ongoing relationship with someone who has limited ability to travel out of his/her home or who may have limited social contact. Visits are generally once or twice a month.

## New Library Books

We have a delicious offering of new books in early December, thanks to our Book Selection Committee (Bettie Clark, Anita Cline, Pam Henriksen, Diana Johnson, and Judy McDowell).



*Americanah*, by Ngosi Adichie; story of young Nigerian couple; both come to America, separation, reunion, the difference between African American and American African  
*A Banquet of Consequences*, by Elizabeth George.  
*Career of Evil*, by Robert Galbraith; investigator Robin Ellacott, three twisted suspects  
*Dark Corners*, by Ruth Rendell; last mystery of hers, trendy London neighborhood  
*The Golden Age*, by Jane Smiley; third volume in trilogy brings Langdon family to present  
*The Japanese Lover*, by Isabel Allende; love story epic, WWII Poland to present  
*John LeCarre, a Biography*, by Adam Sisman  
*Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson; Harvard grad, spending his life defending children, teens, and adults imprisoned unjustly, and instances of compassion and mercy  
*The Last of the President's Men*, by Bob Woodward; the story of Nixon aide Alexander Butterfield who disclosed the White House taping system  
*My History, a Memoir of Growing Up*, by Antonia Frasier; author of *Mary, Queen of Scots* and one of eight children of Lord and Lady Langford  
*Rogue Lawyer*, by John Grisham; Sebastian Rudd, jaded, cynical, still believes in justice  
*A Strangeness in my Mind*, by Orhan Pamuk; story of an Istanbul street vendor and the love of his life; a coming of age story in a great city  
*Look and Be Grateful*, by Tomie DePaola; young boy awakens, sees radiant sun, tiny exquisite lady bug; seeing each day as a gift (children's book)

# Congregational Life

## Markers & Milestones

We offer our sympathy to the Gahres-Woolford family on the passing of Dr. Ed Gahres, October 20, 2015. A Memorial Service was held on Sunday, November 1.

## Year-End Giving

### A Rock Spring Tradition And Vital Element of Support

Traditionally, Rock Spring has benefited in the final months of the year from multiple gifts from members and friends who find themselves in a position to give extra support to our church. These gifts, large and small, make up a vital element of our church budget. So please consider giving the church a helping hand by making a year-end gift to Rock Spring if you are in a position to do so. Just drop an extra check in the collection plate or convey appreciated stock.

We also generally experience a drop off in pledge income during the summer months when many folks are away. This usually picks up and pledges are brought current in the fall. If your pledge is not current, please consider this a friendly reminder to try to bring it current so that we can end the year in a strong financial position.

If you have questions about year-end giving or any aspect of church finance, please feel free to contact John Morland, Chair, Board of Finance.

P.S. Making year-end contributions by donating appreciated stock enlarges both the size of the gift to the church and the charitable tax deduction for you. If you have questions about how to donate stock, please contact our Financial Secretary, Don Johnson.

## New Website Features

Check out "Meet our Members," a new feature on the web site found under the tab, "About Us." We will be adding a couple of new profiles each week for the next several weeks.

## Rock Spring Young Adults

Rock Spring's Young Adults (roughly defined as individuals 5 or fewer years out of college) are getting connected and reconnected! Through a text group and Facebook group, we are organizing to keep our young adults in touch with the church and with each other. The group's initial event was a Sanctuary decorating party and lunch at Peter Chang's (which replaced their beloved Oriental Gourmet) on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Plans are in the works for another gathering around Christmas. If you or someone you know belong in this group, contact Ashley Martinage or Laura Martin, or join the Facebook group at <http://bit.ly/RSyoungadults>.

## Christmas Open House

You are warmly invited to join Dale and Kathy Dwyer on Sunday, December 13 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the parsonage (4969 Rock Spring Road) for refreshments and conversation. Consider popping into the Open House before heading to the Christmas Concert at 4:00 p.m!



# Congregational Life

2016

## ROCK SPRING LIFE RETREAT

**Do you like to walk in the woods? Sit by a roaring fire on a cold winter's evening?**

**Do you like to prepare and eat excellent food with friends and family? Meet new friends?**

Enjoy a weekend away from the hustle and bustle and do all of these things and many more at the annual **Rock Spring Life Retreat** (formerly the Rock Spring Family Life Retreat)!

**When:** Friday, February 5, 2016 through Sunday, February 7, 2016

(arrive Friday evening and leave Sunday mid-morning)

**Where:** Cacapon Resort State Park, Berkeley Springs, WV ([www.cacaponresort.com](http://www.cacaponresort.com))

**Who:** All Rock Spring members and friends of all ages

**Accommodations:** We stay in cabins and at the lodge. Most cabins are four bedrooms and will house 2 to 4 family groups. There are also some two-bedroom cabins that can accommodate two singles or couples, or a single larger family. If you want a lodge room, please let us know ASAP, as availability may be very limited.

**Activities:** Traditional retreat activities have included both outdoor pursuits (hiking, sledding, capture the flag) and indoor activities (crafts, games, music, baking). But the activities are determined by the people who come - so let us know if there's something you'd like to do or to organize! Would you like to lead a book discussion or a night-time stargazing group? Let us know!

**PLEASE FILL OUT THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN IT TO JOANNE KELLY, MARTHA JOLKOVSKI, OR TO THE CHURCH OFFICE (mark your check clearly for the RSLR).**

**ALL REGISTRATIONS AND FEES MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 27, 2015.**

**If you have questions, feel free to ask Martha Jolkovski, or Joanne Kelly.**

Names of those attending (including children, if any, and children's ages – please use the back if you need more):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Age: ) \_\_\_\_\_ (Age: ) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Age: ) \_\_\_\_\_ (Age: ) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Age: ) \_\_\_\_\_ (Age: ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Fee Paid (please circle applicable fee and include a check made out to Rock Spring, with FLR in the memo line):

Single person: \$ 60.00	Four people: \$160.00
Two people: \$100.00	Five people: \$190.00
Three people: \$130.00	Six or more: \$220.00

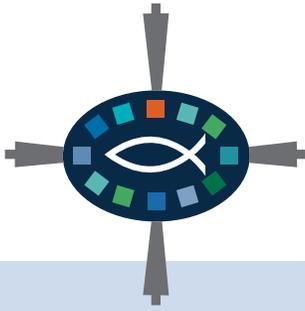
Please indicate if you need a crib, rollaway, or other special accommodations.

Please note if you want a lodge room or if you need/want a single-family cabin.

\_\_\_\_\_

Activities you'd like to participate in or organize (include target ages, if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Rock Spring

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

5010 Little Falls Road,  
Arlington, VA 22207  
(703) 538-4886  
[www.RockSpringUCC.org](http://www.RockSpringUCC.org)

## **The Congregation, *The Ministers***

**Kathryn N. Dwyer**, *Senior Pastor*  
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**Laura Martin**, *Director of Mission Integration  
and Congregational Care*  
[laura@rockspringucc.org](mailto:laura@rockspringucc.org)

**Ashley Martinage**, *Director of Faith Formation*  
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**Elizabeth Kluegel Niblock**, *Director of Music*  
[elizabeth@rockspringucc.org](mailto:elizabeth@rockspringucc.org)

**Edward Roberts**, *Assistant Director of Music  
and Organist*  
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## **Administrative Staff:**

**Sarah Lengyel Steel**,  
*Bookkeeper and Operations Consultant*  
[office@rockspringucc.org](mailto:office@rockspringucc.org)

**Easterlyn Walters**, *Office Administrator*  
[easterlyn@rockspringucc.org](mailto:easterlyn@rockspringucc.org)

## **Childcare Staff:**

Fern Lawrence, Judy Carrillo,  
& Blanca Cespedes

## **Custodial Staff**

Willis Gardner & Vicky Morales

## **Rock Spring Congregational**

5010 Little Falls Road  
Arlington, VA 22207