

Rock Spring News

Let all we do be done in love.



UCC General Minister and President to Visit Rock Spring September 9

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer, the ninth General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, will preach on “A Future in Which We Matter” at our 10:00 a.m. worship service and will be in coffee hour for informal conversation afterwards. At 12:00 noon, he will lead a workshop called “White Privilege: Let’s Talk.” Lunch will be served. If you know you will attend the lunch, please RSVP to info@rockspringucc.org to help us plan for food. Please note if you have any food allergies or restrictions.

Rev. Dorhauer has a doctoral degree in White Privilege, and previously taught a course on the subject at Eden Theological Seminary. One of his first initiatives as general minister and president was to develop a curriculum that could be used across the denomination to address racism. The curriculum, “White Privilege: Let’s Talk” launched in September, 2016.

Dorhauer is passionate about justice. Two statements that shape his theology are: “God is love. God is just.” He is also passionate about the future of the denomination, insistent “that the Holy Spirit envisions a future in which the United Church of Christ matters.” During his tenure, he is calling on the denomination to rethink itself and to consider new ways of “being church” in light of reduced societal interest in institutional religion, and

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Launch Sunday

Join us as we return to two worship services and launch our new program year.

Sunday, September 16

9:00 a.m.

Around the Table Worship

10:00 a.m.

Adult Education

11:00 a.m.

Worship & Sunday School

4:30 p.m.

YoRS (Youth of Rock Spring)



ROCK SPRING **Sundays in September**

September 9 Rev. John Dorhauer, Guest Preacher, "A Future in Which We Matter"
Texts: Genesis 1:1, John 16:7
 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed Video Class
 10:00 a.m. Worship & Sunday School (see cover page)
 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour with Rev. Dorhauer
 11:00 a.m. Rock Spring Playgroup (see page 14)
 12:00 p.m. White Privilege Workshop

September 16 **Twenty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time**
Texts: Malachi 3:10, Mark 8:31-37
 9:00 a.m. Around the Table Worship
 10:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
 10:00 a.m. Adult Ed Video Class
 11:00 a.m. Worship & Sunday School
 4:30 p.m. YoRS – Youth of Rock Spring (see page 8)

September 23 **Twenty-Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
Texts: Psalm 124, Mark 9:30-37
 9:00 a.m. Around the Table Worship
 10:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
 10:00 a.m. Adult Ed Video Class
 11:00 a.m. Worship & Sunday School
 12:30 p.m. All Hands on Deck: Stream Cleanup (see page 9)
 4:30 p.m. YoRS – Youth of Rock Spring

September 30 **Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time**
Texts: James 5:13-20, Mark 9:38-50
 9:00 a.m. Around the Table Worship
 10:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
 10:00 a.m. Adult Ed Video Class
 11:00 a.m. Worship & Sunday School
 4:30 p.m. YoRS – Youth of Rock Spring

Reflections

"Why I Love the Church with a Capital C"

I love the Church.

Of course I love Rock Spring, and the people of Rock Spring, but my connection to the Church with a capital C is much deeper. I suppose that is not a surprise to anyone, but as I have been anticipating the visit of Rev. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, to Rock Spring this month I have been reflecting on why this is so.

During my sabbatical last summer I worshipped in congregations in several parts of the world. I experienced good music and music sung with gusto, but missing the beat and the pitch. I sat in buildings which had been so well used that they were in disrepair and others that were clearly tended to with extraordinary care. I worshipped in sanctuaries that were packed full of people and places where the pews greatly outnumbered the people. Sometimes the message was inspiring and sometimes ... not. Not once did I say, "I wish I had skipped that."

It's not that I don't care about any of these things. I do, but ultimately it is not the music or the sermon, the building, or even the specific people I see that keep me showing up on Sundays when it is not my job to be there. Here are 5 "unchurchy" reasons "Why I Love the Church with a Capital C":

1. Connection: I love the way Church helps me experience a sense of connection to the human family, to creation, and to God. No matter where I worship there is some sort of sharing of the joys and concerns. I don't need to personally know the people and places named to experience a connection to the beauty and struggle in this world, beyond my own. The double gift here is that I am reminded that (a) it's not all about me and (b) I am never alone.
2. Story Telling: The stories of our faith, and the rhythm of the seasons in which we tell them, again and again, help to give meaning, purpose and context to my own story.
3. Perspective & Imagination: Hearing someone



Kathy Dwyer, Senior Pastor

else's truth, asking, being asked, and pondering difficult questions all help open my mind to new ways of understanding myself and the world around me. Imagination is a close cousin to perspective. The Church at its best is always helping me imagine a better future and calls me to be my best self. As Margaret Wheatley writes, "The cure for despair is not hope. It's discovering what we want to do about something we care about." The church helps me do that.

4. Practice: There is no safer place to practice love, forgiveness, being a leader, or being a follower.
5. A Piece of the Whole: Perhaps this is a close cousin of connection, but I experience it differently. Sometimes when I am singing a hymn I have sung for generations or we are remembering a life well lived, I know in my bones that we are surrounded by that "great cloud of witnesses." When we collect an offering for One Great Hour of Sharing, I know that my offering is not only multiplied by those at Rock Spring, not only by those of others in our denomination, but by churches all across the land who are working to bring aid and relief to others. When we join with Catholic Charities or EcoAction Arlington or other congregations to act on our faith, I realize the power in numbers working for change. When I attend General Synod or worship with another

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Reflections

congregation in downtown D.C., Broadus, Montana, or Coimbatore, India I realize that I am joined, we are joined, by millions of others who are telling the stories of their faith, imagining a better world, and day by day living into it.

Nothing on this list prescribes a particular style of worship or manner of being church. Change and new ways of being church are emerging. I look forward to seeing how the Church might change through the years and still continue to provide these essential functions.

I hope you will plan to come hear Rev. John Dorhauer talk about "A Future In Which We Matter" on Sunday, September 9.

Let all we do be done in love,

— *Kathy*

"...There is a discipline in taking what we cannot choose, in seasons and in life."

Some people love the first stretches of fall, the days that tuck under more quickly, the pumpkin spice everything escapades, the smell of woodsmoke in the air, leaves crunching under your feet. I'm not one of those people. I love the languorous stretch of summer nights, when the light can't be hurried to settle. I love the blossoms of spring or the green of summer more than crunching leaves of fall. I savor the more open time, the meetings cancelled, the space that seems to call for creativity and listening. I savor the ripe tomato, the scent of just-picked mint that lingers on my hand, the time for another evening walk with my dog. I savor the farmers' market berries, the corn laid out, the musicians playing at the edge.

But we don't always live in spring and summer. And there is a discipline in taking what we cannot choose, in seasons and in life. And there is a discipline in looking for the gratitude and the glimmers there also. This is a rhythm that we hear in Scripture, such as Ecclesiastes "to everything



Laura Martin, Associate Pastor

there is a season." There is a rhythm that we hear in the liturgical year, the way that we move from Advent to Christmas to Epiphany, and on through the church's year. There is a beauty in moving with awareness and intention even through the spaces we do not choose. There is a beauty and a challenge in choosing to pay attention to the moment, to feel the crispness of fall or notice the shorter days.

So this fall, I won't be lining up to ride the Pumpkin Spice Express. My spirit may not ever lift for orange leaves quite the way it does for spring blossoms. And I will pull out the sun lamp that I use every fall and winter for my Seasonal Affective Disorder. But that doesn't mean that I can't also relish the gift of a pumpkin curry, or the way that a jacket feels on my skin. I don't want to miss the way that my dog is friskier in the chill of the morning, or the way children start talking about their Halloween costumes in September. I want to welcome this season, this time that says in its own way that it is part of God's creation. I want to feel the hope of fresh beginnings in new school years or program years. I want to hear the language that can only be spoken in this time, this present moment. I want to hear the language that I will only notice if I am paying attention, taking it all in.

With joy,

— *Laura*

From Council



Council Update

With the return to two-service Sundays and the full church program – and of course the "back-to-school" rush everyone gets swept up in no matter our age or student status – September always feels like another new start. May it be a good one for all of us!

Over the summer Council continued to support and monitor the church's finances, operations, and programs. We are in excellent shape financially. We are gratified by the resilience of the office and pastoral staff and volunteers, as this summer has brought its challenges. We are thrilled with the launch of the Mission Projects. We are making great progress on technology and the task force to consider database upgrades is hard at work. And we are delighted to be at the final punch-list and inspection stage of the Campus Renewal Project. Thank you to the boards, committees, and individuals who give so much of their time and so much of their hearts to Rock Spring!

With gratitude, and as always, please let us know if you have ideas or questions.

– Carolyn Hart and Lucy Carlson (carolyn@harts.org; lucygcarslson@icloud.com)

Campus Renewal Committee September Update

I thought that we would be across the finish line by now, but as usual there have been a few delays. We have completed three important inspections (elevator, electrical, and mechanical), however we still have two more remaining (building and environmental). They will be completed in September.

We have resolved two difficult and potentially expensive issues. Arlington County has determined that we do not need to have a sump pump installed for the elevator or a manhole cover on the 72" underground pipe. And while there has been an unanticipated delay in the fabrication of the screen for the A/C units above the Connector, our Project Manager got Hyatt Corp.-Bethesda to donate one of the more expensive components.

Installation of cabling infrastructure, WiFi, and data networking has been completed. Many thanks to Sarah Gilmour and Robert Clark for their efforts in coordinating and completing this work with Clear Connection.

Once again, I hope this is my last report. Thanks to all for your patience and support.

~ Peter Geiger, Campus Renewal Committee Chair

IT Update

Behind the scenes this summer, Rock Spring undertook a major IT upgrade focused on our network and telecommunications infrastructure. We replaced obsolete equipment that, in some cases, was no longer supported by vendors. The project entailed new network cabling to include Fiber Optic cabling, new network cabinets, patch panels, and 12 new WiFi access points to support the new campus configuration post renovation.

As a result, we now have high bandwidth communications and WiFi throughout the campus for staff, the congregation, and our guests. Additionally, these upgrades provide the network and telecommunications to allow for new and improved services for audio-visual equipment, voice & data streaming, and other software to support Rock Spring program activities that require network and internet access in the future.

To connect to our new WiFi, Rock Spring Main, look for instruction cards around campus. Once connected, you will enjoy seamless access to the Internet and WiFi calling.

Worship and Music



Rev. Dorhauer to Visit

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the steep decline in the membership of the UCC since the 1960s. He says alternatives to institutional churches, what some call the “emergent church,” will not immediately supplant, but will grow alongside the institutional church for a long time.

Dorhauer received a B.A. in Philosophy from Cardinal Glennon College (1983), and has a Master of Divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary (1988), the same year he was ordained in the United Church of Christ. He received a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary (2004), where he studied white privilege and its effects on the church.

Along with his passion for justice, Dorhauer has a passion for and love of baseball – specifically the St. Louis Cardinals – music, literature and poetry. He has been married to his wife, Mimi, for nearly 31 years and they have three children.

Fall Sermon Series: Theological Fake News



What is the good news and what is the fake news? What are statements that we have heard again and again – in churches, by Christians – that call for greater exploration and debunking? Join us beginning September 16 for a four week sermon series on “Theological Fake News.” Are health and wealth really signs of God’s favor? Is God “on our side”? Does everything really “happen for a reason”? Does God never “give us more than we can handle”? We invite your engagement and your reaction as we unpack what is real news and what fake news deserves to be tossed!

It’s Almost Choir Time!

“All are Welcome!” Elizabeth and Ed hope to see many new and returning faces to the music program at Rock Spring. There is a place here for you to lend your voice!



Sanctuary Choir – the adult choir sings at the 9:00 a.m. service on the 1st Sunday of the month, and at the 11:00 a.m. service the rest of the month. Rehearsals begin Thursday, September 6, 7:30–9:00 p.m.

Men’s Ensemble – adult and teen males sing 4-part harmony pieces. Rehearsals begin Thursday, Sept. 13, 7:00–7:30 p.m.

Youth Choir – 5th through 12th grade youth. Rehearse Sundays at 12:00–12:30 p.m. in the Choir room and sing most 1st Sundays of the month at the 11:00 a.m. service.

Choristers - Kindergarten through 4th grade. Rehearse Sundays from 10:15–10:45 a.m. and “robe up” and sing the introit most Sundays for the 11:00 a.m. worship. Sing an anthem about once a month.

If you are interested and have questions, feel free to contact Elizabeth or Ed.

Thank You Summer Musicians

A big “thank you” to all the singers who gave us their gift of music this summer in our summer choir. Special thanks to Rev. Susan Henderson, Jason Henderson, Al Olsen, Devin Divecha, and Dan Betts for bringing us and teaching us some wonderful tunes.

Faith Formation



From the Director of Faith Formation

“Difficult Conversations” is the topic of our fall Adult Education Retreat (read more about it in the article below). But as I’ve been preparing for that retreat and simultaneously preparing my children for going back to school, it occurred to me that some of the most difficult conversations in my daily life happen around the dinner table!

You know the conversation I’m talking about... The one that goes nowhere, and fast. How was your day? “Fine.” What did you learn? “Nothing interesting.”

Whether asking about school or Sunday school or youth group or a weekend away, some days, prying anything out of them feels like a Herculean task.

Sometimes, though, it just takes a shift in the questions to get a conversation started. Here are a few questions that have served me well:

- Tell me something funny your teacher said or did today.
- What was the most challenging thing that happened today? How did you handle it?
- What was the best thing that happened to you today? Who did you share it with?
- What did you learn that surprised you?

Maybe some of these questions will work for you, too. And if you have a go-to question, I’d love to hear it!

With joy,
–Ashley

Difficult Conversations: The Art & Science of Thinking Together Saturday, Sept. 29, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Neighborhood House



We are called to “love our neighbor” and to define “neighbor” in the most expansive way possible. But how can we love them if we can’t even talk to them? This one-day retreat will explore principles and strategies that will allow you to engage in meaningful and productive dialogue with anyone – regardless of social, economic, and ideological differences. Focusing on the question, “Who do we need to be to have the conversations we need to have?” participants will use personal stories to learn skills, such as how one critical shift in thinking can turn a negative interaction into one that’s creative and constructive. Our facilitator is Kern Beare of Mountain View, CA, whose not-for-profit initiative is focused on helping to heal our divided nation. Check out his website and blog at www.popthebubble.org. Registration forms are in the Saegmuller Room or on the Rock Spring website. Speak to Ashley with questions.

Sunday School!



What a wonderful summer we had in Sunday School! Thank you to everyone who taught and played with our young Rock Springers this summer. On Sunday, September 9 during the 10:00 a.m. worship service, we will have a special all-ages Sunday School where we will make name tag buttons to use throughout the year. The full Sunday School program will begin September 16 during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Classes will meet weekly for preschoolers through 5th graders; 6th-8th graders will remain in worship on the 1st Sunday of each month. Registration forms will be available during coffee hour.

Faith Formation



Pub Theology

Tuesday, September 11, 7:30 p.m., Clare & Don's, Falls Church

Join us for a pub theology jump-start on our fall sermon series! Come and discuss the "theological fake news" that you have heard, debated, rejected, or are still wrestling with. This casual, warm space together is meant to encourage deep conversations and first encounters with new friends. The evening will open with a starter question to get to know each other, and then move into small, rotating conversation groups for this evening's theme in response to question prompts. Follow the prompt or go your own path in conversation! Food and drink are available for purchase.

Youth of Rock Spring (YoRS) Fondue Feast September 16, 4:30-6:00 p.m.



Do you like to hang out with friends, play games, engage in service projects, and have a safe place to talk? If so, and if you are in grades 6-12, Youth of Rock Spring is for you! This year YoRS will meet on Sundays from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. (except on holiday and school vacation weekends) beginning September 16. Middlers (grades 6-8) will gather in the YoRS room off Carpenter Hall; high schoolers (grades 9-12) will meet in the YoRS room off Upper Neighborhood House. Lock-ins, ropes courses, game nights, crafty activities, cooking for others, and service projects are all on our agenda this year. Join us on September 16 for our annual Chocolate Fondue feast and bring your dreams and ideas for the year. Contact Ashley Martinage for more information.

Weekly Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

Each week, Rock Spring offers several faith formation opportunities for adults. As you are planning your schedule, why not make space for one or more on your calendar?

Tuesdays @ 10:00 a.m.: Lectionary Bible Study Join the preaching pastor to explore the Bible texts that will be used in worship the following Sunday.

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m.: Video Discussion Class This class watches lectures from the Great Courses DVDs (currently *The History of Christianity from the Reformation to the Present* with Prof. Molly Worthen). Coffee is served along with some discussion. Join at any time.

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. beginning October 7: Faith + Life A series of four themed classes, one for each Sunday of the month. Join one or all! More details in the October RSN.

- 1st Sundays: Bible Basics with Janice Langholz. "Good news or fake news" is the title of this year's class, which will explore the similarities and differences between the synoptic Gospels.
- 2nd Sundays: Rituals of the Church. Coordinated by Dale Dwyer, this class will explore the whys of worship, each month examining a topic like prayer, liturgy, sermons, and Baptism. See more in the next article.
- 3rd Sundays: Bible 101 with Linda Carder. This class focuses on the Old Testament, putting the Bible story in historical and cultural context.
- 4th Sundays: Faithful Families with Ashley Martinage. How do we connect church to home? Come and learn simple faith practices that you can use at home with your family.

Rituals of the Church Exploration Class



Are you interested in knowing more about our worship practices? What is the theological purpose of the sermon or of Baptism? How have these practices changed over time? Join Dale Dwyer and a variety of experts to ground yourself in the "whys" of worship. Topics will include liturgy, sermons, prayer, Baptism, Communion, and more. The class will meet in two parts each month. On the 2nd Sunday, Dale will lead an overview of the month's topic at 10:00 a.m. as part of Faith + Life. On the following Friday, go deeper into the topic from 7:00-8:30 p.m. with an expert. The class will meet on the following dates: October 14 & 19; November 11 & 16; December 9 (no Friday class in December); January 13 & 18; February 10 & 15; March 10 & 15; and May 12 & 15 (no class in April). You may attend both sessions each month, or just one as your interest and schedule permit. Mark your calendar now and look for more details in the October RSN.

Mission & Social Justice

All Hands On Deck: GAP Mission Project Stream Cleanup Sunday, September 23, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Glencarlyn Park, Picnic Shelter 1



Gather in Glencarlyn Park (301 S. Harrison St., Arlington) for a stream cleanup and picnic, led by our partner EcoAction Arlington (EAA). This is the launch of Rock Spring's Green Accelerator Project (GAP), whose mission is to combat the impacts of climate change on our church campus, in our homes, in our community, and in rural villages abroad. Join us for an afternoon of fun and learning led by experts from EAA and Arlington County. Questions? Talk with Stuart Scott, Laura Watchman, or Laura Martin. This event is meant to be very family-friendly and include opportunities whether you are 2 or 92! You'll want to wear boots (if you plan to wade in the stream) or closed-toed shoes, long sleeve shirts and pants. To be eco-conscious, we encourage you to bring your own water bottle.

12:45-1:30

- Picnic with fellow Rock Springers, park neighbors, and guests from the Sikh community in Sterling, VA!

1:30-3:30

- Pick up ... trash and recyclables from Four Mile Run and the park.
- Pull out ... invasive plants, led by a local expert who will teach us to distinguish the "good" plants from the "bad."
- Put in ... understory plants in a location near the bike trails, led by a local expert who will show us how this helps strengthen the riparian landscape and decrease erosion.
- Play ... children can enjoy a scavenger hunt, nominate candidates for the "Ugliest Trash" contest, and meet some of the creatures—maybe a lizard, a turtle or a frog!—we're trying to help with our cleanup efforts.
- Pick a "P" and pitch in! EcoAction will provide gloves or you can bring your own. Rock Spring is providing the picnic. All we need is your enthusiasm and help to make the afternoon an ecological success.

Stay tuned for information on other GAP activities, including steps that each of us can take to achieve green energy savings and how Rock Spring's support of the Solar Village Project in rural India is already changing lives.



Mission & Social Justice

“BorderLinks” Trip Planning Underway

What does it feel like to walk through the desert as a migrant? What is court like for a mother applying for asylum? What does being in detention mean? BorderLinks has been trying to answer these questions. Since 1987, BorderLinks has been facilitating educational immersion trips for delegations in the Arizona-Sonora region and beyond the border to Chiapas. Through dynamic educational experiences, BorderLinks connects divided communities, raises awareness about the impact of border and immigration policies, and inspires action for social transformation. Laura Martin is currently collecting names of people who would be interested in learning more about a 5 day trip to Tucson in February. Please let Laura know (laura@rockspringucc.org) if you would like to explore this. The trip would be open to Rock Springers and friends, potentially in conjunction with another church or churches. If there is great interest, we would look at future trips on different dates.



2018 Rock Spring Grantees

The Social Action and Mission Board is pleased to announce this year’s recipients of Rock Spring Grants. They range from \$500 to \$5,000 and are designed to help organizations that meet the most basic human needs of our community.

Grants include a wide range of organizations both local, national, and international, and fund such activities as program support for food insecure students; legal services for low-income immigrant families in Northern Virginia; and training support for a green housecleaning class.

A total of \$44,250 was allocated. This year’s grantees are:

- Alliance for Housing Solutions: \$1,000.00
- Arise Campus Ministry: \$500.00
- Arlington Food Assistance Center: \$1,000.00
- Arlington Free Clinic: \$2,000.00
- Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing: \$2,000.00
- Arlington Retirement Housing Corporation (Culpepper Garden): \$3,500.00
- Arlington Street People’s Assistance Network, Inc. (A-SPAN): \$1,000.00
- Arlington Thrive, Inc.: \$3,500.00
- Bridges to Independence: \$3,000.00
- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP): \$2,500.00
- Doorways for Women and Families: \$2,000.00
- Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS) and Interfaith Power & Light (IPL-DMV): \$1,000.00
- Just Neighbors Ministry Inc: \$3,000.00
- Khwendo Kor (Sisters’ Home): \$2,500.00
- La Cocina VA: \$1,000.00
- OAR -- Offender Aid and Restoration of Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church: \$2,500.00
- Sebastian Hunter Memorial School and Community Development Project Trust: \$500.00
- Shaw Community Center: \$1,250.00
- Shelter House, Inc.: \$2,500.00
- Shirlington Employment and Education Center: \$4,500.00

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Mission & Social Justice

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- Thrive DC: \$2,000.00
- Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE): \$1,500.00

The Grants Committee appreciates the work Rock Springers did to reach out to organizations they knew to encourage these groups to apply. We funded three groups outside of the Arlington community because of these connections: Churches for Middle East Peace, Khwendo Kor (an organization working on schools for girls in Pakistan), and Sebastian Hunter Memorial School and Community Development Project Trust (a group that sets up schools for children in India).

Decisions were made by the SAM Grants Committee, led by Diana Maxwell, which also included Margaret Miller, Hannah Chismar, Susan Woods, Denise Sisson, Carolyn Hart, Gail Howell, and Bob Harris. Grantees were notified at the beginning of August. Any questions about the Grant process can be directed to Diana Maxwell.

Welcoming the Stranger Summer Highlights

Welcoming the Stranger held two joyous events this summer – an intergenerational soccer picnic on July 22 at Chinquapin Park in Alexandria and a brunch for seniors on August 11 in Carpenter Hall. The picnic was touch-and-go all weekend as the heavens poured forth rain. However, the weather cleared for a 2-3 hour period just as the picnic was about to begin and, thanks to the valiant efforts of the set-up crew who swept water away from the picnic pavilion, we were able to hold the event! Everyone had a great time and we were even able to get in some soccer. It was a beautiful sight indeed to see youngsters from Rock Spring playing soccer with other young people from South Asia and Central America. One Rock Springer reported that he heard two refugee boys from different nations talking about setting up a soccer team. We hope this picnic can become an annual event.



The senior brunch was also fun and inspiring. Rock Spring volunteers picked up refugees from around the area and brought them to Carpenter Hall, where we shared a simple but delicious brunch. Leah Kane sang and played her guitar to the delight of all; we also enjoyed a beautiful Indian dance and conversation about the challenges of growing older. Several Rock Springers reported that the highlight of the morning was in seeing senior refugees, who are often isolated, connect with each other and share contact information. Other Rock Springers noted how appreciative participants were for the opportunity to socialize and share concerns, such as difficulties in finding employment.

Here is how one participant summarized his engagement: *I sat with two Iraqi men, both from Baghdad, who had not met previously. One was an engineer, the other a businessman. Both have been in the U.S. about four years; both are underemployed, but grateful to be among the fortunate few who made it to America. The engineer spoke the better English.*

He is plagued by the fact that he and his wife had to leave their oldest child, a daughter who
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Mission & Social Justice

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is a dentist in Iraq, behind when they came to America. She was over 21 when they applied for refugee status, and that is a hard and fast dividing point in U.S. law. Her absence is a constant worry. He talked about her a lot, shared a photo, etc. Her chances of getting to America are not good. Meanwhile, his son is now in a medical residency (he was just under 21 at the time of application), and another daughter is in med school. He worries about his lack of health insurance but a Rock Springer pointed out that Virginia's planned Medicaid expansion in January may provide coverage.

He expressed his gratitude for the event. He was effusive, and I said, "Well, it is a small thing, but I'm glad you found it worthwhile." "No," he replied, "it is a very big thing."



Another participant told this story: I know that embroidery is a skill of women in Afghanistan and Iraq. I have my Mother's threads and took them to give to interested women. I watched women and identified two older Iraqi women in scarves, etc. I guessed right that they would like some threads. Sign language connected us and the box of threads. She, through the interpreter, daughter of the other older woman, said that she wanted a sewing machine to make clothing for her grandchildren. A spare part now has been ordered with hope that it will fit.

Another Iraqi lady in her 50's came to our "thread" table and wanted thread to teach her daughter to do embroidery like she had along the edge of a large table cloth. She does not know where to get needles and other supplies. At her request, we exchanged phone numbers. She likes art

and antiques and indicated that we could enjoy an outing.

The practicality of this relationship is complex (my favorite word encompasses much) and may apply to any further friendships. She lives far from me. Her accent is very strong and I don't hear well, but we can learn to shout a little. Does the friendship begin that I help her find needles, etc. and do I pay or does she have money. Since we have shown there is money for picnic and soccer equipment, etc., she may assume that whatever she may need, I, or the church will pay. This is delicate and perhaps we will need to discuss what assumptions we both have.

Also, I wish that Rock Springers would share our lives with them. I could have told them that I know how it feels to be evacuated from possible harm. They really need to know who we are.

I enjoyed the event very much. Oh, yes, I offered threads to each lady and most accepted, but only one skein although I suggested another. The two children took silver thread and the mother said only one too. Perhaps, they have not learned the American trait to take all you can get.

The brunch resulted in a rich array of ideas for future connections such as hosting teas for refugees from the same country, helping seniors access Medicare or Medicaid, and starting a play group with refugee families with young children. Stay tuned for more opportunities to connect with our new friends from around the world.

Congregational Life

Potlucks @ The Parsonage Are Back

For the second year, Dale and Kathy will be inviting a portion of the congregation to join them on Friday evening at the parsonage for a potluck. They are looking forward to informally engaging with many of you over the year through these shared meals.

To create the guest lists, they divided the congregation by the alphabet and then combined letters to form similar sized groups. Then, they randomly picked the order of these groups to determine the schedule, which follows:

- September 28 – B, P, Q
- October 19 – H, L
- November 2 – M, Y, Z
- January 25 – N, D, E, J, O
- February 22 – S, F, A
- March 22 – W, G, O
- April 26 – K, T, U, V
- May 24 – R, C

All potlucks will be from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., and people of all ages, regardless of their last name, are welcome to attend with the invitee. (For example, if Sam Brown is living with Nancy Norris, Sam is welcome to attend with Nancy on the night designated for Ns.) Dale and Kathy will provide the beverages, and ask that you bring a dish to share with a note or card we can display that describes the ingredients. They will not be "organizing" the menu so come prepared for a serendipitous delight for your appetite!



Rock Spring Cooperative Preschool Turns 75!

All Rock Springers are invited to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Rock Spring Cooperative Preschool. They would especially love to see former parents (and students!), so please spread the word.

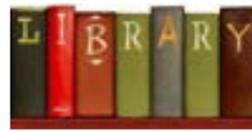
Note that an RSVP is appreciated to:

president@rockspringpreschool.org.

Rock Spring joins in celebrating this 75 year partnership, and looks forward to another 75 years.



Congregational Life



Library News

Stop by and add some "Star Power" to our books. If you have read a really good book from the library, pick up a star-shaped post-it in the library and sign it. Put it on the spine of the book so that others can see. Other users will appreciate your recommendations.

This fall we will start computer check-outs for the books in the Rohrer Memorial library room. Look for an announcement in the bulletin.

The children's library is up and running in the upper atrium. We now have better lighting. Books there can be checked out using our card system.

Did you know that the library is like a growing vine with its flowers being "special collections" in many parts of the church building? The **Children's Library** also houses collections of **parent/family support** books and some favorite **Intermediate reader** books. There are a **hand-made ministry** collection and a **Rock Spring authors** collection in the library itself. Soon there will be a collection addressing **Israeli and Palestinian issues** in the Saegmuller room. There is also a **Christian Education** collection for adults in Room 205 of the Hunter building.

The book selection committee returns to its work in early September. You will see the fruits of their labor when the new books are ready for you to read in October. In the meantime, check out the latest blog post by Gail Howell, reviewing Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*, on the Library page of the Rock Spring website.

Markers & Milestones



Caroline "Pearl" Spies, daughter of **Caroline Johnson Spies & Joel Spies, Jr.**, was baptized on Sunday, August 19. Pearl is the granddaughter of **Susan Nelson & Tom Johnson**.

Our sympathy extends to the Barber family. **Mary Jane Barber** passed away on October 25, 2016 and was interred in Memorial Terrace on July 2, 2018.

Exploring Membership

Sunday, September 30, 8:45 - 10:45 a.m.

Are you curious about how to become more involved with our faith community? Are you unfamiliar with the United Church of Christ and interested in learning more about this socially and theologically progressive denomination? Are you curious about exploring what membership means at Rock Spring and whether or not it is a fit for you? If so, please join Kathy Dwyer for breakfast and conversation at the Parsonage (4969 Rock Spring Road). Bring your questions, curiosities, and appetite! To help us prepare, please RSVP by emailing joinus@rockspringucc.org. We plan to receive new members on Sunday, October 14.

Playgroup for Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers

Sunday, September 9, 11:00 a.m., Playground

Join us for the next meeting of the Rock Spring Playgroup for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers! We will meet after the 10:00 a.m. service on the church playground (or in an indoor location at church if weather isn't good). Contact Caitlin Conover (ckovzelove@gmail.com) or Katie Hopkins (kathleen.b.hopkins@gmail.com) with any questions. We hope to see you there!

2018-19 Program Year Overview

Mark your calendars for these highlights of the coming program year. Additional details about many of the offerings are included throughout this newsletter.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Illume Worship

"Illume: to fill with light, to enable (one) to understand, especially in a spiritual sense. Worship experiences that bring light to the meaning of the seasons."

All services begin at 7:00 p.m.

Taizé – Friday, October 12

Gratitude – Wednesday, November 7

Longest Night – Friday, December 21

New Year's/Epiphany – Friday, January 4

Blessing of the Animals

Saturday, October 6, 5:00 p.m. - Rock Spring Lawn

Christmas Eve

Monday, December 24

Services at 4:30, 8:00, & 10:00 p.m.

CHURCH LIFE

Exploring Membership Class – September 30
(New members join October 14)

Heritage Sunday - October 14
Featuring the *Catawba College Choir*

Budget Goals Meeting – October 21

Thanks + Giving Sunday – November 18

Annual Meeting – January 27

Exploring Membership Class – April 7
(New members join May 5)

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Neighbors in Need – October 7

Christmas Fund – December 24

One Great Hour of Sharing – TBA

Strengthen the Church – June 9

FUN & FELLOWSHIP

Progressive Dinner - October 7

Christmas Caroling/Parsonage Open House –
December 16

ROCK SPRING RECITAL SERIES

The Rock Spring Recital Series brings distinguished performers to the Sanctuary for afternoon concerts. Free, with a suggested donation of \$10.00. Kids' concerts are designed to introduce our youngest Rock Springers to classical music in an interactive, and accessible way. 2019 performers to be announced soon!

Sunday, January 13 – 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 9 – 10:30 a.m. Kids' Concert

Sunday, February 10 – 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 9 – 10:30 a.m. Kids' Concert

Sunday, March 10 – 3:00 p.m.

CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 9 – 3:00 p.m.

ROCK SPRING RETREATS

Opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, and getting to know fellow Rock Springers.

Saturday, September 29 – Co-Ed Retreat
*"Difficult Conversations:
The Art & Science of Thinking Together"*
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

February 1-3 – Rock Spring Life Retreat
"Church in the Woods"
@ *Cacapon State Park, Berkeley Springs, WV*

May 3-5 – Rock Spring Women's Retreat
"Wisdom Ways of Knowing"
Facilitator: *Rev. Sarah Anders*
@ *Carter Hall Conference Center*

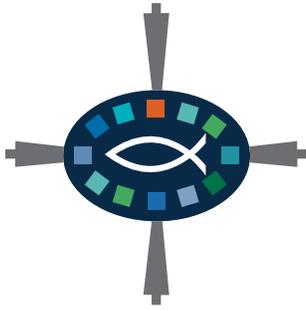
MISSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE

All Hands on Deck: Stream Cleanup – September 23
Sponsored by Green Accelerator Project

Crop Walk: October 13, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
@ *Arlington Presbyterian Church*

Bloodmobile: November 11

All Hands on Deck: Rise Against Hunger – January 13



Rock Spring

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Let all we do be done in love.

5010 Little Falls Road,
Arlington, VA 22207
(703) 538-4886
www.RockSpringUCC.org

Our Core Values

An Inclusive Community: All persons are an integral part of the human family, created in the image of God. We strive to be a place where all people know they are valued for their unique experiences and gifts. We actively seek to include everyone around our table.

A Caring, Generous Community: People of every generation and in all communities have both needs and gifts. We are committed to sharing with each other, and with our neighbors in the community and around the world, the talents and gifts we have been given.

A Learning Community: We are curious, open-minded people of all ages who meet to nurture our intellectual and spiritual development. We help each other listen for the still-speaking God.

A Justice Seeking Community: We seek just peace through building relationships and through making small, deliberate choices. We advocate for individual human rights, and social and ecological justice, seeking to be in solidarity with the disadvantaged. Together, we seek to bring about the world God intends.

A Faith-filled Community: We approach faith and worship in many different ways with respect and a desire for engagement with other traditions. We strive to use our Christian faith to guide our decisions and our actions.

A Joyful Community: We are grateful for the gift of life and for each other. Fun and laughter are woven into the fabric of our lives together. We strive to bring a spirit of joy to all that we do.

Mission Statement

Rock Spring is a progressive Christian community - welcoming, compassionate, and joyful. We love and care for one another. We strive to discern God's still-speaking voice through worship, study, fellowship, and service. We work for peace and social, economic, and ecological justice. We seek a greater understanding of others, and thus ourselves, recognizing that all persons are members of our one human family. Our community prepares and sustains us as we work together to bring about the world that we believe God intends.

The Congregation, The Ministers

Kathryn N. Dwyer, Senior Pastor
kathy@rockspringucc.org

Laura Martin, Associate Pastor
laura@rockspringucc.org

Ashley Martinage, Director of Faith Formation
ashley@rockspringucc.org

Elizabeth Kluegel Niblock, Director of Music
elizabeth@rockspringucc.org

**Edward Roberts, Assistant Director of Music
and Organist**
ed@rockspringucc.org

Administrative Staff:

Sarah Lengyel Steel,
Bookkeeper and Operations Consultant
office@rockspringucc.org

Kayla Neal, Temp. Office Administrator
officeadmin@rockspringucc.org

Childcare Staff:

Fern Lawrence & Blanca Cespedes