



August 2025

THE ROCKTONIAN

Welcoming all in Jesus' name
as we Grow Together in Faith, Service, and Love
Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Welcome

Meet Our Secretary

If you have not already heard, the church has hired a new secretary! Her name is Lindsey Lancaster, and she has been working in the church for a little over a month. (She started just a week or two before Pastor Seong) Lindsey is no stranger to small churches, having previously held the secretarial position at the Old Stone Church in Rockton. She resides with her husband and children in Machesney Park, IL. Lindsey will be in the office regularly on Thursdays from 9a- 1p, with other hours as needed. Lindsey has had a warm welcome, and she is looking forward to getting to know and work with more members of the congregation as she continues to settle into her position.



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The Gift of the Unexpected

Like many others, my life has been full of the unexpected—which, not coincidentally, has been the theme of two of my recent sermons. When I first told my parents I wanted to go to seminary and become a military chaplain, I didn't have a detailed plan—just a strong desire to serve God and care for people in difficult times. I had no idea where that path would lead. I certainly didn't imagine that years later I'd be appointed as a pastor in the United Methodist Church by the Northern Illinois Conference and move with my family to Rockton. A teenager born in South Korea, who once wanted to wear a chaplain's cross on a military uniform, somehow ended up here—standing in the pulpit of Rockton UMC. It's one of the most surprising and beautiful turns in my life.

After completing my chaplaincy, I came to the U.S. to pursue graduate studies in the Bible and ancient Judaism, thinking my path was leading deeper into scholarship. I was fascinated not only by the content of Scripture, but also by the ancient languages behind it—Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and others. That interest had roots in childhood: I grew up watching Indiana Jones movies, completely taken by the scenes where Indy could read ancient manuscripts and mysterious inscriptions. The idea that words from thousands of years ago could still speak today captured my imagination early on. So, when I entered graduate school, I pictured myself

in academia—teaching, researching, and writing about these ancient texts that had long fascinated me.

But as I studied more deeply, something unexpected began to stir again—my original calling to walk alongside people, not just texts. I didn't expect that, years later, I'd be stepping back into full-time ministry. That part of the story, and how it unfolded, is something I look forward to sharing in a future article. But for now, I've been reflecting on how often the unexpected becomes the space where grace meets us. In one recent sermon, I shared how the parable of the Good Samaritan shows love coming from an unexpected place—from someone no one would have counted on. And in another, we reflected on the story of Martha and Mary, where Jesus gently invites Martha to let go of her expectations and receive what truly matters in the moment. These stories have helped me see my own journey differently—that the surprising turns in our lives are often where God is most at work.

As I was writing this article, I paused and looked out the window from the parsonage living room. I took a photo of the backyard—a scene so serene and peaceful that it still feels a bit surreal. That moment reminded me again: life doesn't always follow our plans, but God continues to surprise us with grace, beauty, and good people. I don't know exactly what comes next, but I trust that God will keep leading the way, surrounding us with one another, as we continue to grow together "in faith, service, and love!"

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seong

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What's Up with the Building?

by John Carleton, Trustee Chair

Any doubt anyone had about whether or not we need to have the roofs redone was put to rest when the ever-vigilant Nancy and Darlene found the hole that had appeared in the ceiling of the North Room of the Sanctuary a couple of weeks ago. That leak had been fixed once before but here it was again soaking and sagging the ceiling after three plus inches of rain. The roofing contract has been signed and the roofing materials are scheduled to show up sometime during the week of August 4th . When, exactly, the contractor will start depends a great deal on the weather which has been challenging lately both in terms of rain and excessive heat. Watch the bulletins and emails as we will try to let you know when work will start as soon as we know. While the work is being done, please be sure you park away from the building and the stack of materials both for your safety, your car's safety, and to not impede the workers. While it may not be obvious, if you happen to have a conversation next to the windows in the front of the Education Wing on your way into church, you may have noticed that they are actually painted. You also may have noticed that some of that paint has chipped and peeled over the years. Now, if you look again next Sunday, you will notice some of that has been repaired. It's slow, meticulous work but we are fortunate to have the talents of Dan Enderle who is gradually touching things up. Fall is approaching, so, being an art teacher, he may not get finished before school begins, but he's made a good start.



Many thanks to those of you who volunteered to mow the church lawn. Brenda has set up a nice rotation so no one has to mow it every week. Now, I know this will be hard to process as we deal

with the dreaded heat dome, but we need to start thinking ahead to setting up a snow-removal team. At this point, maybe the thought of shoveling snow or cranking up the snow-blower sounds kind of good, but reality will eventually set-in when November and December come around. Be thinking about it and let a Trustee know if you'd be willing to help clear the walks. I think we only had to shovel less than half-a- dozen times last winter and sometimes folks just have to spread salt and scrape a little. Saturday night ice or snow just before Sunday services can be especially annoying but it is also especially dangerous. Unlike the lawn, the schedule is very erratic and subject to the whims of the weather but it is a very important job helping keep everyone safe from slipping. So, if you can help, we'd love to hear from you.

Finally, the Parsonage is in need of a cordless weed wacker as ones the church has now are either too old or large edgers. If you have a good one you're willing to provide or you'd like to donate one, it would be greatly appreciated.

Continued from the Pastor's Desk





Thank you for reading!

Rockton United Methodist Church

Pastor Seonghyun Choi

www.rocktonumc.org
Office Hours Mon & Thurs. 9am-1pm
email: RocktonUMC@gmail.com

102 W. Chapel Street
Rockton, IL 61072

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Loren Floto Memorial 1:30p Anderson Japanese Gardens
3 9:30am Worship 10:30am 	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 9:30am Worship	11	12	13	14	15	16 Soup Kitchen
17 9:30am Worship	18 4pm Trustees 5pm Finance	19 4:30 pm Ad Council	20  Newsletter articles due	21	22	23
24 9:30am Worship Food on the 4th	25	26	27	28	29	30

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