



December 2025

# THE ROCKTONIAN

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

## Caritas Volunteers Needed

We're in need of lots of volunteers for the Santa Visit/Toy Shoppe. If you'd like to volunteer, please let Cindy (obrien54@yahoo.com) know by December 4th, including your name, phone number, and email address.

Here's a breakdown of the volunteer needs:

December 10th (Wednesday)

12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.: Help transform the pantry into the Toy Shoppe.

December 10th & 11th (Wednesday & Thursday)

3:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.: Help with tasks such as:

Walking kids through the Toy Shoppe

Wrapping gifts

Helping kids pick gifts for their parent/guardian

Handing out cookies

Assisting parents with carrying gifts to their car

Taking photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus

December 12th (Friday)

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.: Help pack up toys and bring pantry food back into the pantry.

Additional Needs:

We are also accepting \$10 gift cards to places like Culver's, GameStop, and Walmart for the older kids. These make wonderful gifts!

Thank you so much for your continued support! We couldn't do this without you, and we're looking forward to a wonderful holiday season together.



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## A Visit to Boston and an Unexpected Reunion

One of the things I'm learning again and again—especially in ministry—is how much of life is shaped by the people God places along our path. Relationships have a way of steadying us, encouraging us, and sometimes surprising us in the most meaningful ways. I was reminded of this in a powerful way during my trip to Boston this November.

I was there for the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, a large gathering where scholars from around the world share research on ancient Jewish and Christian writings. I attended to present a paper on metaphor and religious knowledge in the Dead Sea Scrolls, those remarkable ancient Jewish texts that include biblical books and many others that help us understand Scripture more deeply.

That morning, as I was walking toward the conference room to get ready for my presentation, one name suddenly rose to the surface of my mind. I don't know why it happened, but I found myself thinking of Dr. Eric Reymond, who teaches Hebrew at Yale Divinity School. When I studied there from 2015 to 2018, I took four of his classes. His courses were demanding, but he welcomed every question and encouraged every student. He was one of the first people in this country who made me feel truly at home in academic study of

Scripture.

With his name still lingering in my thoughts, I stepped into the conference room, and there Dr. Reymond was standing right at the entrance. I hadn't even opened the program book to see if he was attending the conference, yet somehow we ended up in the same room at the same moment after seven years. He told me he had also been thinking about me that morning, saw my name in the program, and decided to come hear my paper. It felt like one of those small graces God weaves quietly into our lives.

We talked for a while afterward, catching up on life and family. When Dr. Reymond heard that I had begun my first ministry in the Methodist Church, he was genuinely delighted and offered words of encouragement that meant more to me than he probably realized.

I'm not sure when our paths will cross again—especially since my attention these days is centered here in Rockton—but that unexpected reunion reminded me how deeply relationships shape and sustain us.

This trip wasn't just about presenting an academic paper. It was a reminder that God often brings people into our lives at just the right moments, sometimes in ways we could never plan. As I continue settling into my ministry here at Rockton UMC, I carry this reminder with gratitude. I'm thankful for the relationships that formed me, and I'm excited to keep building meaningful ones with this congregation.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seong

# What's Up with the Building?

by John Carleton, Trustee Chair

What's Up with the Building for December 2025?

Hard to believe this is the last time I'll be typing 2025 at the end of a What's Up Article already. It's been a busy year.

The snow will be upon us sometime in the near future so the salt and shovels are out near the doors ready for who's ready to use them. We still need volunteers to help with salting and shoveling so let us know if you're willing and able to be included in the rotation to do the walks. We especially need folks for those pesky Saturday evening/Sunday morning snow falls when we need the walks clear for services. The church has a snow blower that's kept just inside the South West entrance to the Education Wing. It has a plug-in electric start so let us know if you'd like to help and need a tutorial on starting it. It was only used a couple of times last year so, here's hoping.

The boilers are on so heat is available. With the building only being used a couple of mornings a week and on Sunday, we keep the thermostats low to save money. That means if you have a meeting or a group working during the week or on Saturday, you'll need someone to come in early to turn up the heat in the area you'll be using as hot water heat from radiators doesn't come up as fast as forced air like most of us have in our homes. And, if you turn up a thermostat for

something, please be sure to turn it down into the low 60's when your event is over. Not sure where the thermostats are for where you'll be? Send me an email and I can send you a list of where they are.

The lift was a little temperamental last week but it seems to be running okay now. Just be sure you have someone who knows how to use it around and try to avoid using it by yourself. There is an emergency call box to the left of the controls if anyone were to get stuck in it and not have a cellphone with them.



Finally, as some of you may know, the owner of the cleaning company, Pinnacle Cleaning, we have used for the past several years, had a heart attack and had to sell his company to a long-

time Rockford firm, Viking Pro Cleaners. Thanks to all the church members who helped out during October when Pinnacle wasn't able to clean. Some of Pinnacle's staff who have cleaned our church for years will be returning with Viking Pro, so hopefully, the transition will be smooth. As you can guess, things will be in a state of flux for awhile but plans are to still have the church cleaned during the last week or so of each month. Please let us know if you have any areas of concern.

## Sisters in Christ

Friendsgiving was a delicious success. Methodists are known for great potluck dinners, and we proved it. Thanks to everyone who came. We plan to host this event again next year.

Sisters in Christ will enjoy our annual Christmas Party on December 9th, 6pm, at Margo Leden's home, 13956 Sunrise Circle, Rockton. Please bring a treat to share. If you need a ride, please call Phyllis at 608-368-1057. Margo's home is always decorated beautifully, and we really appreciate her kindness in hosting this event.



## Christmas Poinsettias



This Christmas we're bringing back a tradition many in our church family have cherished. You're invited to purchase a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of someone special. The poinsettias will be arranged on the altar for worship on Sunday, December 21 and again on Christmas Eve, adding a beautiful touch to our celebrations. After Christmas Eve, you're welcome to take your plant home.

Order forms will be included in the bulletin for the next two Sundays. Simply fill one out and return it to the office, and everything will be ordered and delivered in time for the 21<sup>st</sup>.



From the Pastor's Desk cont.



## Warming Station

Rockton United Methodist Church

102 W. Chapel Street

Saturday Dec. 6th 10am-4pm

ROCKTON

## CHRISTMAS



Free Hot Chocolate,  
Coffee, water, and photo  
area

Chili for sale



Thank you for reading!

Rockton United Methodist Church

Pastor Seonghyun Choi

[www.rocktonumc.org](http://www.rocktonumc.org)  
Office Hours Mon & Thurs. 9am-1pm  
email: [RocktonUMC@gmail.com](mailto:RocktonUMC@gmail.com)

102 W. Chapel Street  
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6  Rockton Christmas Walk
7 9:30am Worship  10:30am 	8	9  Christmas Party 6pm	10	11	12	13
14 9:30am Worship  Girl Scouts 1:30-3:00pm	15  4pm Trustees 5pm Finance Church Council	16  4:30 pm Ad Council	17	18	19	20   Newsletter articles due
21 9:30am Worship	22	23	24  Christmas Eve Service 4pm	25  <b>Christmas Day</b> (office closed)	26	27
28  Food on the 4th	29	30	31  New Year's Eve			

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