

RESTING • RENEWED • RESPONDING

RIVERVIEW

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

WELCOME TO RIVERWOOD

We are glad you are here! Finding a church home can be a daunting process, so we want to help you by telling you who we are up front. We are first and foremost a people **resting** in God's grace offered to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ, being progressively **renewed** by the Holy Spirit, and **responding** in faith, repentance, and obedience.

We are also a reformed, confessional church. That means that we trace our roots back to the Protestant Reformation, and we view the historic confessions, catechisms, and creeds as being invaluable and immensely relevant, because they were derived from our ultimate authority: God's word.

No matter where you are in your understanding of the Christian faith, we hope you find Riverwood to be a place where you can build relationships, ask questions, and grow in your knowledge of Jesus.

We would love to connect with you today before you leave! You can help us with that by scanning the QR code on the back page of this bulletin and filling out the linked *Information Connection* page. Our elders will also be in the foyer after the service to meet you and answer any questions you may have.

Now receive this welcome into worship from the risen, reigning Christ:

**"To all who are weary and need rest; to all who mourn and need comfort;
to all who fail and need forgiveness; to all who struggle and need strength;
to all who sin and need a savior: this church opens wide her doors
in the name of Jesus, the friend of sinners."**



The immense step from the Babe at Bethlehem to the living, reigning triumphant Lord Jesus, returning to earth for his own people—that is the glorious truth proclaimed throughout Scripture. As the bells ring out the joys of Christmas, may we also be alert for the final trumpet that will announce his return, when we shall always be with him.

Alan Redpath

The ultimate future of the believer is the resurrection of the body at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15). On that glorious Day, the soul and the raised and transformed body of the believer will be one again as God originally created them to be. Not only will our bodies and souls be freed from the remnants of sin, the heavens and earth will be renewed and freed from the curse of sin as well (Rom. 8:18–25). This new earth, in which righteousness dwells, will be our home.

Keith Mathison

Look up, you whose gaze is fixed on this earth, who are spellbound by the little events and changes on the face of the earth. Look up to these words, you who have turned away from heaven disappointed. Look up, you whose eyes are heavy with tears and who are heavy and who are crying over the fact that the earth has gracelessly torn us away. Look up, you who, burdened with guilt, cannot lift your eyes. Look up, your redemption is drawing near. Something different from what you see daily will happen. Just be aware, be watchful, wait just another short moment. Wait and something quite new will break over you: God will come.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



December 24, 2023

10:30 Worship Service

Leaders In Worship: Pastor, *Jeff Pate*
Assisting Elder, *Gene Martin*
Piano, *Nancy Allen*

WELCOME

Program all communication devices to be in silent mode. Thank you.

ADVENT READING and PRELUDE

Love: 1 John 4:7-10

PRAISE

CALL TO WORSHIP: *based on the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55)*

Pastor: Today we gather to magnify the Lord, rejoicing in God, our Savior,
who has looked on our humble estate.

**All: We are indeed blessed, for he who is mighty has done great things
for us and holy is his name.**

Pastor: His mercy is for those who fear him and he exalts those who are humble,
but he scatters the proud and brings down the mighty.

All: He fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty.

Pastor: Come in the fear of the Lord, humble and hungry. Come, let us worship.

HYMN: 214

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.

CONFESSION OF SIN

SCRIPTURE READING: *Deuteronomy 5:17-21*

17 "You shall not murder. **18** And you shall not commit adultery. **19** And you shall not steal. **20** And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. **21** And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN:

Merciful God, you pardon all who truly repent and turn to you. We humbly confess our sins and ask your mercy. We have not loved you with a pure heart, nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. We have not done justice, loved kindness, or walked humbly with you, our God. Have mercy on us, O God, in your loving-kindness. In your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not cast us from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

RESPONDING TO THE GOOD NEWS

WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *from Philippians 2*

Leader: Now lift your heads and turn your eyes to Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. By God's grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, your sins have been atoned for and you are forgiven. The peace of Christ be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

HYMN: 232

"O Jesus Sweet, O Jesus Mild"

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *Westminster Confession of Faith, 8.2*

Leader: Christian, what does Scripture teach about the two natures of Christ?

All: **The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.**

RESPONSE: "Gloria Patri"

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

HYMN: 225

"Once in Royal David's City"

SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 24:29-51*

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **30** Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. **31** And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. **32** From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. **33** So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. **34** Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. **35** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. **36** But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. **37** For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **38** For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, **39** and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **40** Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. **41** Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. **42** Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. **43** But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. **45** Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? **46** Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. **47** Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. **48** But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' **49** and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, **50** the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know **51** and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Pastor: The grass withers, the flower fades,
All: but the Word of our God will stand forever.

SERMON: "Staying Ready for the Next Advent"

Rev. Jeff Pate

COMMUNION & BENEDICTION

HYMN: 324

"Christ Is Coming!"

RESPONSIVE READING & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

Pastor: With joy we praise you, gracious God, for you created heaven and earth, made us in your image, and kept covenant with us — even when we fell into sin.

All: We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord, who by his life, death, and resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

Pastor: Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of your name.

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

HYMN: 207

"Good Christian Men, Rejoice"

BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSING HYMN: #263

"Lift High the Cross"

Refrain:

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, till all the
world adore his sacred name.

Thy kingdom come, that earth's despair may cease beneath
the shadow of its healing peace.

(Refrain)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tonight at 6:00pm, Riverwood will conduct a Christmas Eve candlelight Communion Service. It is a beautiful time in which we gather as the people of God to consider again the wonder of Advent and the beauty of our Savior. Please plan to join us with your family for this special time of praise and worship.

No Sunday School

Due to the Christmas holidays, Sunday School classes will not meet next Sunday, December 31.

Thank you! ThAnK yOu!! THANK YOU!!!

Thank you to everyone who helped with Angel Tree. Thank you to the drivers who delivered the gifts. Thank you to everyone who purchased a gift for a child. Thank you to everyone who purchased food. Thank you to the prayer warriors who prayed for the children and this program. We served 14 families and 28 children. Thank you to this body of Believers who serve not only this program but other programs as the hands and feet of Christ. Have a very Blessed Christmas!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Happy Birthday

December 25 Lakethia Clark

December 25 Zae Finch

Church Office Closed

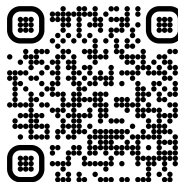
The church office will be closed the week of December 25. Regular office hours will begin again on January 3.

2023 Contributions

If you are planning to give before the end of the calendar year, please ensure that your gifts make it into the offering plate by Sunday, December 31 or are postmarked by Saturday, December 30. Any contributions received after that date will be posted to 2024.

Financials through November

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Operating Income: | \$372,566.49 |
| Operating Expense*: | \$387,317.39 |
| Net Income: | (\$14,750.90) |
| Designated gifts: | \$30,655.00 |
| Building loan balance: | \$534,870.71 |



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