

# REFLECTIONS

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God travels wonderful ways with human beings, but he does not comply with the views and opinions of people. God does not go the way that people want to prescribe for him; rather, his way is beyond all comprehension, free and self-determined beyond all proof. Where reason is indignant, where our nature rebels, where our piety anxiously keeps us away: that is precisely where God loves to be. There he confounds the reason of the reasonable; there he aggravates our nature, our piety—that is where he wants to be, and no one can keep him from it. Only the humble believe him and rejoice that God is so free and so marvelous that he does wonders where people despair, that he takes what is little and lowly and makes it marvelous. And that is the wonder of all wonders, that God loves the lowly.... God is not ashamed of the lowliness of human beings. God marches right in. He chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them. God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak and broken.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

For outlandish creatures like us, on our way to a heart, a brain, and courage, Bethlehem is not the end of our journey but only the beginning - not home but the place through which we must pass if ever we are to reach home at last.

Frederick Buechner

The first time [Christ] came to slay sin in men. The second time He will come to slay men in sin.

Arthur Pink

If I don't believe that there is a God who will eventually put all things right, I will take up the sword and will be sucked into the endless vortex of retaliation. Only if I am sure that there's a God who will right all wrongs and settle all accounts perfectly do I have the power to refrain.

Tim Keller

# RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## T U S C A L O O S A , A L A B A M A

December 10, 2017 • 11:00 Service • Rev. Jeff Pate, Pastor

### Second Sunday of Advent

Leaders In Worship: Assisting Elder Steven Crawford  
Joann Williams, piano

#### WELCOME & PRELUDE

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

*Please use this time for prayer and meditation as we prepare to go before the living God in worship.*

## PRAISE

SCRIPTURE READING & LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE: *Isaiah 40:1-11*  
Paul & Audrey Vermilyea

#### CALL TO WORSHIP: *from Psalm 28*

Pastor: To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

All: **Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.**

Pastor: Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

All: **The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.**

Pastor: Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever. Come, let us worship!

HYMN OF PRAISE: 97 “We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator”

#### 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.*

# CONFESSIO

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**SCRIPTURE READING:** *Proverbs 15:1-5*

<sup>1</sup>A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. <sup>2</sup>The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly. <sup>3</sup>The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. <sup>4</sup>A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. <sup>5</sup>A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

**CORPORATE CONFESSIO** OF SIN:

All: Gracious Father, by your word the heavens and the earth were created and you powerfully formed us for your own glory. It is only by your sovereign power and sustaining grace that we have life and breath. Please forgive us when we use our mouths to lash out at one another, creating division where you desire unity and discord where you desire peace. Give us gentle tongues that commend knowledge and bring peace. Forgive us for our prideful responses to those who offer loving correction. Give us humility of heart so we can receive such correction with gratitude and thereby grow in wisdom. We ask this in Christ's name, amen.

**SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSIO**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD:** *based on Micah 7*

Pastor: Hear the message of the good news of God's mercy for sinners, fulfilled by the finished work of Jesus Christ. Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?

All: **He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.**

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

**HYMN:** 197 "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"

# COMMITMENT

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## OFFERTORY PRAYER

### OFFERTORY

*Only a Baby Came*

Riverwood Choir

Presentation of tithes & offerings

DOXOLOGY (Hymnal, page 731)

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 33: “Of the Last Judgment”

Leader: God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given by the Father.

All: **As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.**

RESPONSE: 735 “Gloria Patri”

## MISSIONS MOMENT

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

HYMN: 226 “As with Gladness Men of Old”

# PREACHING OF THE WORD

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**SCRIPTURE:** *Luke 12:40-48*

<sup>40</sup>“You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

<sup>41</sup>Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” <sup>42</sup>And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? <sup>43</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. <sup>44</sup>Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. <sup>45</sup>But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, <sup>46</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. <sup>47</sup>And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. <sup>48</sup>But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.”

**SERMON:**

“Middle Management”

Rev. Jeff Pate

## COMMUNION

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**HYMN:** 195 “Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come” st. 3-4

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

*Riverwood Presbyterian uses wine in the celebration of Holy Communion. If you would prefer non-alcoholic grape juice, please take a cup from the inner circle of the tray.*

**RESPONSIVE READING:** *Psalm 103:1-5; Revelation 5:12*

**Pastor:** Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

**All:** **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,**

**Pastor:** ...who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

**All:** **Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!**

**HYMN:** 316 “The Mighty God, the Lord”

**BENEDICTION**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**DISMISSING HYMN:** 263 “Lift High the Cross” v. 4

# TODAY AT RIVERWOOD

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Covenant Kids Club meets tonight at 4:30pm. Youth Groups meet tonight as well (see detailed announcements below). Choir rehearsal is in the sanctuary at 5:00pm.

## SUNDAY EVENING SCHEDULE

- Dec. 10 Covenant Kids Club / Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group / Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 17 Angel Tree Party
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

## JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP TODAY

Calling all 6th through 8th grade youth - come on out to the Barn this afternoon from 4:30 to 6:10 and join us for TELESTRATIONS: ROUND 2, followed by some Christmas Carols and a message on Mary's Song. Hope to see YOU there!

## SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP TODAY

Calling all 9th through 12th grade youth - come on out to the Barn this evening from 5:40 to 7:45 for an intriguing round of CHRISTMAS MAFIA. Then stick around for some great singing and a message on PROPHECY & CHRISTMAS. It will be a night to remember!

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

December 14 Erin Sheppard

## LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

## FINAL CATECHISM CLASS

This week Wednesday, December 13, at 3:30pm is the final catechism class for the fall semester. Classes will resume on January 17.

## SESSION AND DIACONATE MEETING

The elders and deacons will meet this Wednesday, December 13, at 6:30pm in the Administration Building for their monthly meeting.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## ANGEL TREE FOOD BASKET AND PARTY NEEDS

Non-perishable food items are needed to give to the Angel Tree Families. This year we are providing food for 11 families. The Deacons provide a small ham. Would you please consider providing items that will help make a wonderful Christmas dinner for these families? Non-perishable breakfast items will also be welcomed. A box for these items is by the Angel Tree.

The Angel Tree Party is next Sunday, December 17. If you are able to provide a salad, macaroni & cheese, or a dessert to supplement this meal please sign up using the link in your weekly email, or see Joann Williams.

Please return all Angel Tree gifts by December 13 to the church office. If you have a child from TN, please mail their gift and card by December 13.

## RIVERWOOD CLASSICAL SCHOOL BALLET RECITAL & CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Please come join the students and families of Riverwood Classical for their Christmas Ballet Recital and Concert and Art Show this coming week! The ballet program will hold its Christmas recital on Thursday, December 14, at 6:30 p.m., which will feature Christmas music, cute little ballerinas, and graceful older ballerinas, even some en pointe. The next evening, Friday, December 15, at 6:30, the school students will hold their annual Christmas concert, featuring Christmas carols sung and chimed, a memory song, and the RCS students' version of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. The Christmas concert will be immediately followed by a reception and Art show.

## YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTIES NEXT WEEK

We are planning some super-fun events for the Junior High and Senior High Christmas parties next Sunday, December 17th (regular youth group times). ONE of these events will be a DIRTY SANTA gift exchange which will take place at the end of each party. ALL YOUTH NEED TO bring a wrapped present of \$15 or less in value for the exchange (something appropriate and fun for your age group). NOTE: Do not label your gift in any way so that it will remain anonymous. Thanks!

## CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

On Sunday, December 24, at 5:30pm, 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.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

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At Riverwood Presbyterian Church we have Sunday School at 9:45am for all age groups.

## MEETING DOWNSTAIRS:

Nursery: Multi-Staffed  
2-3 year olds: Janalie Graham & Joanie Norris  
4-5 year olds: Debbie Jones

## MEETING UPSTAIRS:

Grades 1-3: Monica Urban  
Grades 4-6: Ginny Nippert

## MEETING IN THE BARN:

Youth Class – led by Jeff Pate

## MEETING IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL:

Adult Class

## MEETING IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING:

Benevolence Committee – led by the Diaconate

# MINISTRIES OF SERVICE

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## NURSERY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE:

December 10: Amanda Brown / Debbie Jones / Elena Arnold & Wilson Pate / Kaitlin Jones  
December 17: Denell Skaar / Meg Sigmon / Vielyana Kim & Quay Finch / Chanley Henson

## DECEMBER DEACON SCHEDULE:

Head Deacons: Dusty Sheppard & Chris Locklear  
Clean Up: Bruce DeHaan & Ed Kidder

# FINANCIAL REPORT

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## OPERATIONS:

Operating Income:	\$386,782.20
Operating Expense*:	\$383,350.10
Net Income:	\$3,432.10
Designated gifts:	\$56,006.68

\*Includes the minimum monthly building loan payment

## BUILDING FUND:

Total pledges received:	\$795,304.09
Received 2017 to-date:	\$86,555.23
Building account balance:	\$20,332.14
Monthly payment:	\$7,791.19
Loan balance:	\$994,034.25