

The present experience of those united by faith to Christ in his suffering and exaltation, not only their future, is essentially eschatological; the Christian life is an eschatological life.

Richard Gaffin, Jr.

To identify your own idols, ask questions like these: What things take the place of God in my life? Where do I find my significance and my confidence? What things make me really angry? Anger usually erupts when an idol gets knocked off the shelf.

Philip Graham Ryken

Prayer is often undervalued in our fast-paced, media-addicted, simplistic culture. And for that reason, it's perhaps the most vital spiritual discipline for mature leaders to develop...leaders who know the complexity of gospel ministry, the duplicity of their own hearts, and the inadequacy of their own resources are constantly being driven to prayer, and are finding in Scripture the words to give voice to their prayers.

Robert H. Thune
from *Gospel Eldership*

RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

December 13, 2020 • 8:30 & 10:30 Services • Rev. Jeff Pate, Pastor

Third Sunday of Advent

8:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Jimmy Hopper
Tindol Pate, piano

10:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Allen Powers
Dr. Linda Graham, piano

WELCOME

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

SCRIPTURE READING & LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE: *Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11*

PRELUDE

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

PRAISE

CALL TO WORSHIP: *from Psalm 80*

Pastor: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

All: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Pastor: Let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!

**All: Then we shall not turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call upon your name!
Restore us, O Lord God of hosts!**

Pastor: **Let your face shine, that we may be saved!**
Come, let us worship.

HYMN: 218 “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth;
 ye who sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds in the fields abiding, watching o’er your flocks by night,
 God with man is now residing, yonder shines the infant Light:
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
 seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star:
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,
 suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son;
 evermore your voices raising to th’eternal Three in One:
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

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

SCRIPTURE READING: *Zechariah 13:1-6*

¹“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. ²And on that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness. ³And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the Lord.’ And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. ⁴On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, ⁵but he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.’ ⁶And if one asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your back?’ he will say, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN:

Almighty God, you are a God of justice and mercy who upholds righteousness and delights to show steadfast love. You alone can cleanse us from sin and its filth in our lives. Please forgive us for doubting you. We confess that we doubt you when we avoid your Word and listen to our fears instead. We doubt you when we bow to the idols of comfort and ease, choosing to live to serve ourselves with little thought of the needs of those around us. We also doubt you when we don't trust that you could love us, forgive us, and set us free from the bondage of sin. Help our unbelief and shape us to be the people you created us to be, made in your image and for your glory. In the name of Jesus, the Word made flesh. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *taken from Zechariah 13*

Pastor: Hear the good news of your salvation. *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,” declares the Lord of hosts.* The Lord of hosts struck the Shepherd, our Savior Jesus Christ. He received the wounds that our sins deserved and yet he calls us his friends, the sheep of his pasture, and declares that we are his people.

All: **The Lord who pardons sin and cleanses his people from all unrighteousness is our God!**

Pastor: By God's grace and through faith in his Son, your sins are forgiven. May the peace of Christ be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

CONFESSION

HYMN: 232 “O Jesus Sweet, O Jesus Mild”

O Jesus sweet, O Jesus mild,
your Father’s will you have fulfilled.
From heav’n above to earth you came,
and born as man you took our name.
O Jesus sweet, O Jesus mild.

O Jesus sweet, O Jesus mild,
your birth the world with hope has filled.
Your death has ransomed our lost race,
for on the cross you took our place.
O Jesus sweet, O Jesus mild.

O Jesus sweet, O Jesus mild,
we seek to do what you have willed.
All that we have comes from above;
Lord, keep us walking in your love.
O Jesus sweet, O Jesus mild.

COMMITMENT

OFFERING

**Tithes and offerings will be collected by deacons following the morning service as congregants leave the sanctuary.*

COMMITMENT

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

The Heidelberg Catechism, Question and Answer #1

Leader: What is your only comfort in life and death?
People: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

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: 86 “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want” st. 1-3

The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want; he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me the quiet waters by.
He leadeth me, he leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again; and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness, e’en for his own name’s sake;
within the paths of righteousness, e’en for his own name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale, yet will I fear none ill,
for thou art with me; and thy rod and staff me comfort still;
for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me comfort still.

PREACHING OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: *1 Thessalonians 5:11-14*

¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. ¹²We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

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

SERMON: “In Anticipation of His Advent:
 Living Under the Shepherd’s Care” Rev. Jeff Pate

Writing His Word on our hearts: 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10

“⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.”

What is "therefore" referring back to?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

We live in anticipation of Christ's return by following leaders he has provided...

One group, three actions

The congregation's response

...to care for the flock in his name.

Admonish

Encourage

Help

Be patient

Isaiah 61 and our Good Shepherd

COMMUNION

HYMN: 86 “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want” st. 4-5

My table thou has furnished in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows.
My head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me:
and in God’s house forevermore my dwelling place shall be;
and in God’s house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

RESPONSIVE READING:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

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

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.

BENEDICTION

HYMN: 225 “Once in Royal David’s City”

Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall:
with the poor, the mean, and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood he would honor and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden in whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be mild, obedient, good as he.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav’n above,
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him, but in heaven, set at God’s right hand on high;
when like stars his children crowned all in white shall wait around.

BENEDICTION

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December 14 Erin Sheppard

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

COVENANT KIDS CLUB AND YOUTH GROUP

Covenant Kids Club and Youth Group will meet tonight. Covenant Kids Club meets from 5:30-6:30pm behind the Fellowship Hall, and Youth Group meets from 5:30-7:00pm behind the Administration Building.

ANGEL TREE

Thank you to everyone who picked up an Angel. Remember, these are due back by this Wednesday, December 16. You can leave gifts in the Narthex or drop them off at the office. We still need:

1. Non-perishable food donations
2. Drivers for delivering gifts on December 21 & 22.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Joann Williams (jwilliams@riverwoodchurch.org).

YOUTH CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The youth are planning to go Christmas caroling next Sunday evening (12/20) in the front yards of some of our church members. We will plan to meet in the church parking lot at 4:30 pm. There will be a youth Christmas party afterwards to include a gift exchange. If you have questions, ask Pastor Jeff, Eli, or Gracen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Each Christmas Eve we gather as followers of Jesus to read through the narrative of our Savior's incarnation, hear the Word proclaimed, and worship in song and Sacrament. This year we are planning to have two services on Christmas Eve to provide plenty of space for everyone to spread out. The services will begin at 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm.

2020 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 27 or are postmarked by Thursday, December 31. Any contributions received after that date will be posted to 2021.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed the weeks of December 21 & 28. If you need immediate assistance during this time, please feel free to contact your elder or deacon.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through November 2020:

Operating Income:	\$361,595.33
Operating Expense*:	\$374,148.47
Net Income:	(\$12,553.14)
Designated gifts:	\$88,349.43
Building loan balance:	\$746,149.12

**Includes the minimum monthly building loan payment*