

## REFLECTIONS

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Wake, awake, for night is flying;  
the watchmen on the heights are crying:  
Awake, Jerusalem, at last!  
Midnight hears the welcome voices  
and at the thrilling cry rejoices;  
come forth, ye virgins, night is past;  
the Bridegroom comes, awake;  
your lamps with gladness take:  
Alleluia!  
And for his marriage feast prepare,  
for ye must go and meet him there.  
Philipp Nicolai

...the man who has an awakened conscience, is the least likely to be deceived of any man in the world; it is the drowsy, insensible, stupid conscience that is most easily blinded. The more sensible conscience is in a diseased soul, the less easily it is quieted without a real healing. The more sensible conscience is made of the dreadfulness of sin, and of the greatness of a man's own guilt, the less likely is he to rest in his own righteousness, or to be pacified with nothing but shadows. A man that has been thoroughly terrified with a sense of his own danger and misery, is not easily flattered and made to believe himself safe, without any good grounds. To awaken conscience, and convince it of the evil of sin, cannot tend to establish it, but certainly tends to make way for sin and Satan's being cut out.

Jonathan Edwards

No man's really any good till he knows how bad he is, or might be; till he's realized how little right he has to all this snobbery and sneering and talking about "criminals" as if they were apes in a forest ten thousand miles away...till he's squeezed out of his soul the last drop of the oil of the Pharisees; till his only hope is to capture one criminal and to keep him under his own hat.

G. K. Chesterton

Christmas, then, is not a dream, a moment of escapism. Christmas is the reality, which shows up the rest of 'reality.' And for Christmas, here, read Christianity. Either Jesus is the Lord of the world, and all reality makes sense in his light, or he is dangerously irrelevant to the problems and possibilities of today's world. There is no middle ground. Either Jesus was, and is, the Word of God, or he, and the stories Christians tell about him, are lies.

N. T. Wright

# RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

December 6, 2020 • 8:30 & 10:30 Services • Rev. Jeff Pate, Pastor

### Second Sunday of Advent

8:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Jimmy Hopper  
Joann Williams, piano

10:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder John Kim  
Dr. Linda Graham, piano

### WELCOME

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

### SCRIPTURE READING & LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE:

*Isaiah 40:3-5*

### PRELUDE

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

## PRAISE

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### CALL TO WORSHIP: from Psalm 96

Pastor: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

All: **Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.**

Pastor: Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous works among all the peoples!  
For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

All: **Splendor and majesty are before him;  
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**

Pastor: Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness;  
tremble before him, all the earth!  
Come, let us worship.

## HYMN: 196 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
 from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.  
 Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
 dear Desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Joy to those who long to see thee, Dayspring from on high, appear;  
 come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of thy birth we long to hear!  
 O'er the hills the angels singing news, glad tidings of a birth:  
 "Go to him, your praises bringing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."

Come to earth to taste our sadness, he whose glories knew no end;  
 by his life he brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.  
 Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall;  
 this the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,  
 born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
 By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
 by thine all-sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

## 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

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## SCRIPTURE READING: *Psalms 25:1-10*

<sup>1</sup>To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. <sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. <sup>3</sup>Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. <sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. <sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. <sup>6</sup>Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. <sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord! <sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. <sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. <sup>10</sup>All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

## CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN:

Almighty God, to you I lift up my soul. We confess together that our trust is in you because you alone are the God of our salvation. We are sinful people so we ask you to remember your mercy, O Lord. Forgive us for forgetting you and forgetting your love. Have mercy on us for our spiritual laziness and our half-hearted worship. Remember us according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness. Instruct us in the way we should go and lead us in righteous paths. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who has come, and is coming again. Amen.

## SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *taken from 1 John 1:5-10*

Pastor: This is the message we have heard from him, God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

All: **If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

Pastor: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

All: **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Pastor: May the peace of Christ be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

# CONFESSION

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HYMN: 239 “Who Is This, So Weak and Helpless”

Who is this, so weak and helpless, child of lowly Hebrew maid,  
rudely in a stable sheltered, coldly in a manger laid?  
‘Tis the Lord of all creation, who this wondrous path has trod;  
he is God from everlasting, and to everlasting God.

Who is this, a Man of Sorrows, walking sadly life’s hard way,  
homeless, weary, sighing, weeping over sin and Satan’s sway?  
‘Tis our God, our glorious Savior, who above the starry sky  
is for us a place preparing, where no tear can dim the eye.

Who is this? Behold him shedding drops of blood upon the ground!  
Who is this, despised, rejected, mocked, insulted, beaten, bound?  
‘Tis our God, who gifts and graces on his church is pouring down;  
who shall smite in holy vengeance all his foes beneath his throne.

Who is this that hangs there dying while the rude world scoffs and scorns,  
numbered with the malefactors, torn with nails, and crowned with thorns?  
‘Tis our God who lives forever ‘mid the shining ones on high,  
in the glorious golden city, reigning everlastingly.

# COMMITMENT

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## OFFERING

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

# COMMITMENT

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## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

based on *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 33

Leader: What do you believe about the last judgment?

All: God has appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given. On that day, not only the apostate angels will be judged, but also all individuals that have lived upon earth will appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil. God has appointed this day for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient.

Leader: Why did Jesus announce the coming day of the Lord?

All: 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.

Leader: Why didn't he reveal to us when that day would come?

All: Jesus left that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they do not know at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.

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

# PREACHING OF THE WORD

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HYMN: 330 “Holy Ghost, Dispel Our Sadness”

Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness, pierce the clouds of sinful night;  
come, O source of sweetest gladness, breathe your life and spread your light.

Loving Spirit, God of peace, great distributor of grace,  
rest upon this congregation; hear, O hear our supplication.

From that height which knows no measure, as a gracious show’r descend;  
bringing down the richest treasure man can wish or God can send.

Heav’nly Glory, shining down from the Father and the Son,  
grant us your illumination; rest upon this congregation.

Come, O best of all donations God can give or we implore;  
having your sweet consolations we need wish for nothing more.  
Come with unction and with pow’r, on our souls your graces show’r;  
author of the new creation, make our hearts your habitation.

SCRIPTURE: *1 Thessalonians 5:1-11*

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But 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. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

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

SERMON: “In Anticipation of His Advent: Wake Up!”

Rev. Jeff Pate

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

<sup>8</sup>“But 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. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.”

I. The day of the Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly.

*Jesus's teaching on this...*

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 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, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

Matthew 24:36-39

*Two metaphors to drive the point home...*

II. Our view of that Day depends on our spiritual ancestry.

Light/Day versus Night/Darkness

III. We are called to live wide awake!

Awake and sober...

Appropriately clothed...

“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”

Revelation 16:15

*All because of grace...*

HYMN: 320 “Rejoice, All Ye Believers”

Rejoice, all ye believers, and let your lights appear;  
 the evening is advancing, and darker night is near;  
 the Bridegroom is arising, and soon he draweth nigh;  
 up, pray, and watch, and wrestle: at midnight comes the cry.

See that your lamps are burning; replenish them with oil;  
 and wait for your salvation, the end of earthly toil.  
 The watchers on the mountain proclaim the Bridegroom near;  
 go meet him as he cometh, with alleluias clear.

Ye saints, who here in patience your cross and suff' rings bore,  
 shall live and reign forever, when sorrow is no more:  
 around the throne of glory the Lamb ye shall behold,  
 in triumph cast before him your diadems of gold.

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;  
 arise, thou sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.  
 With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see  
 the day of earth's redemption that brings us unto thee.

## 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.**

# COMMUNION

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## 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

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**HYMN:** 195 “Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come”

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: let men their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

## 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

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December 9 Heather Henson

## 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

## 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 Wednesday, December 16. You can leave gifts in the Narthex or drop them off at the office.

## WE STILL NEED:

- Non-perishable food items for food baskets for each family.
- Drivers for delivering gifts. There are 14 families. If I can get seven drivers, you would only deliver to 2 families. Delivery dates are December 21 & 22.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Joann Williams.

## CHRISTMAS CRAFT AND FUN DAY

Christmas Craft and Fun Day will be Saturday, December 12 from 1:00-3:00pm. This day is for children from 4 - 12 years old. We will have crafts, games, the Christmas story, music, and snacks. To help with planning, please RSVP to Joann Williams if your child will attend (jwilliams@riverwoodchurch.org).

## 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*