

REFLECTIONS

Jesus Christ was born into this world, not from it. He did not evolve out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being, He is a Being Who cannot be accounted for by the human race at all.

Oswald Chambers
from *My Utmost for His Highest*

Was there a moment, known only to God, when all the stars held their breath, when the galaxies paused in their dance for a fraction of a second, and the Word, who had called it all into being, went with all his love into the womb of a young girl, and the universe started to breathe again, and the ancient harmonies resumed their song, and the angels clapped their hands for joy?

Madeleine L'Engle
from *A Sky Full of Children*

Those who believe in God can never, in a way, be sure of Him again. Once we have seen Him in a stable, we can never be sure where He will appear or at what lengths He will go, to what ludicrous depths of self-humiliation He will descend in His wild pursuit of man.

Frederick Buechner

RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

December 9, 2018 • 11:00 Service • Rev. Jeff Pate, Pastor

Second Sunday of Advent

Leaders In Worship: Assisting Elder Clay Staggs
Nancy Allen & Esther Wright, piano

WELCOME

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

PRELUDE

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 35:1-10*
Holland Cox, Daniel Kidder, & James Urban

CALL TO WORSHIP: *from Psalm 33*

Pastor: Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.

All: Give thanks to the Lord...Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

Pastor: For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.

All: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts.

Pastor: Come, let us worship!

HYMN OF PRAISE: 110 "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah"

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: *Hosea 6:1-6*

¹“Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. ²After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. ³Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.” ⁴“What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. ⁵Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light. ⁶For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN:

Heavenly Father, we come to you in prayer knowing that you first pursued us. Each time we stray and determine to return to you, we are reminded that you have already come to us as showers. Where your love is generous, like the spring rains that water the earth, our love for you is like dew that quickly evaporates. Please forgive us for fickle hearts and shallow devotion. Holy Spirit, show us the true depth of our sinfulness and remind us what storehouse of eternal blessings are ours in Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us and then make us merciful. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *from Philippians 2 and Ephesians 5*

Pastor: Turn your eyes from your sin and consider the humility and love of Jesus Christ. Though he was in the form of God, he emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

All: **And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

Pastor: Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

All: **Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.**

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

People: And also with you.

HYMN: 198 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates!”

COMMITMENT

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY *Gesu Bambino/Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella* Yon/Trad., arr. Eklund
Presentation of tithes & offerings

DOXOLOGY (Hymnal, page 731)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *Colossians 1:15-20*

Leader: What do you believe concerning Jesus Christ?

All: I believe that: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

RESPONSE: 735 “Gloria Patri”

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

HYMN: 194 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” st. 1-3

PREACHING OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: *John 1:1-4, 10*

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of

men... ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

SERMON: “He Dwelt Among Us: *Christ, the Creator*”

Rev. Jeff Pate

SERMON NOTES:

COMMUNION

HYMN: 194 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” st. 4-5

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!**

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.

HYMN: 214 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

TODAY AT RIVERWOOD

Covenant Kids Club is tonight at 4:30pm. The youth **Christmas party** is tonight, beginning with a movie and popcorn at 4:30. Then, around 6, we will have food, games, a dirty Santa gift swap (be sure to bring a gift worth no more than \$10), singing and all-round merry-making!

SUNDAY EVENING SCHEDULE

December 9	Covenant Kids Club / Youth Group Christmas Party
December 16	Angel Tree Party
December 23	No evening activities
December 30	No evening activities

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

December 9 Heather Henson

December 14 Erin Sheppard

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

LADIES' CHRISTMAS COOKIE SWAP

All ladies are invited to a cookie swap this Tuesday, December 11th, 6:30-8:00pm at Heather Henson's home. Please see the email invitation from Heather for all the details and exchange guidelines.

CHILDREN'S CATECHISM

Children's catechism classes will meet this Wednesday, December 12, at 3:30pm. This is the final class of the semester. Catechism will resume in January.

SESSION & DIACONATE MEETING

The elders and deacons will meet this Wednesday, December 12, at 6:30pm in the Administration Building for their monthly meeting.

ANGEL TREE MINISTRY

Food Drive: We are collecting non-perishable food items to give to the Angel Tree families. This would include items for breakfast, for kid's lunch boxes, and for dinner. There is a box in the foyer of the Sanctuary or you can drop off at the church office.

Gifts Reminder: Angel Tree Gifts are due back by this Wed. December 12th. Thank you for showing Christ's love through this ministry.

Prayer: Please continue to pray for our Angel Tree children and their families.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

On Monday, 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.

2018 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, Dec. 30 or are postmarked by Monday, Dec. 31. Any contributions received after that date will be posted to 2019.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

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: Lorrie Pate

MEETING UPSTAIRS:

Grades 1-3: Greg & Sarah Vander Wal
Grades 4-6: Tom & Elena Arnold

MEETING IN THE BARN:

Youth Class led by Jeff Pate

MEETING IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL:

Adult Class - *Beginnings: Studies in Genesis* led by Jimmy Hopper

MEETING IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING:

Adult Class - *Radical* by David Platt - discussion led by Gene Martin

MINISTRIES OF SERVICE

NURSERY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE:

December 9: Sarah Vander Wal / Debbie Jones / Bruce DeHaan & Sumlin Pate / Kay Kirkley
December 16: Aaron Powers / Katharine Bedsole / April & Michael Henry / Meredith Patridge

DECEMBER DEACON SCHEDULE:

Head Deacons: Bruce DeHaan & Tom Arnold
Clean Up: Steve Patridge & Dusty Sheppard

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through November 2018:

Operating Income:	\$375,823.06
Operating Expense*:	\$403,191.92
Net Income:	(\$27,368.86)
Designated gifts:	\$58,334.12
Building loan balance:	\$885,046.42

*Includes the minimum monthly building loan payment