

Accept suffering with humility. Both suffering and humility will serve you. This apparent fatalism is actually confidence that life is shaped with divine intention, which will express itself in ways that can be baffling or alarming but that always bring an insight, pose a question, or make a demand, to the benefit of those who are alert to the will of God.

Marilynne Robinson

from "Awakening" in *The Givenness of Things*

It is not as a boy that I believe in Christ and confess him, but my hosanna has passed through a great furnace of doubts.

Fyodor Dostoevsky

Any time we look into the newspapers, or into our own hearts, and despair, we do well to remember that God's people have faced similar prospects, similar reversals, similar headlines, similar assaults on faith, and have recovered from the doubt, been rescued from the pessimism and foreboding, and gone on to live in praise of God.

Eugene H. Peterson

I will arise today through God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me.

St. Patrick, 5th Century

RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

January 31, 2021 • 8:30 & 10:30 Services • Rev. Jeff Pate, Pastor

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

8:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Robert Thornton
Joann Williams, piano

10:30am

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder Allen Powers
Linda Graham, 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

CALL TO WORSHIP: *from Psalm 27*

Pastor: The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

All: **The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?**

Pastor: One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:

All: **that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.**

Pastor: Come, let us worship.

HYMN: 38 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render; O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!

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: *Matthew 6:25-34*

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN:

Heavenly Father, we come confessing that our faith is small. Forgive us for when we doubt that you are able or willing to care for us, so we live in fear and anxiety. Please have mercy on us. We confess that we question your control of our lives and the universe we inhabit, so we worry and panic. Forgive our unbelief. Help us to trust you and believe what you have promised in your Word. Help us to remember that you loved us and sent your Son for our salvation. Help us to believe that he upholds the universe by the word of his power and nothing in all creation can separate us from his love for us. Holy Spirit, help us to trust our Savior's self-giving love that secured eternal life for us and then enable us to love and care for the lives of those around us. In Jesus's name, Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *from 1 Peter 1*

Pastor: Hear the good news and believe! You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

All: **Christ died for my sins. God raised him from the dead.
I believe and I am forgiven!**

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

HYMN: 181 “We Come, O Christ, to You”

We come, O Christ, to you, true Son of God and man,
by whom all things consist, in whom all life began:
in you alone we live and move, and have our being in your love.

You are the Way to God, your blood our ransom paid;
in you we face our Judge and Maker unafraid.
Before the throne absolved we stand, your love has met your law’s demand.

You are the living Truth! All wisdom dwells in you,
the Source of every skill, the one eternal TRUE!
O great I AM! In you we rest, sure answer to our every quest.

You only are true Life, to know you is to live
the more abundant life that earth can never give:
O risen Lord! We live in you: in us each day your life renew!

We worship you, Lord Christ, our Savior and our King,
to you our youth and strength adoringly we bring:
so fill our hearts, that all may view your life in us, and turn to you.

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: 36 “Lord, Thou Hast Searched Me”

Lord, thou hast searched me, and dost know where'er I rest, where'er I go;
thou knowest all that I have planned, and all my ways are in thy hand.

My words from thee I cannot hide; I fell thy pow'r on every side;
O wondrous knowledge, awesome might, unfathomed depth, unmeasured height!

Where can I go apart from thee, or whither from thy presence flee?
I heav'n? – it is thy dwelling fair; in death's abode? – lo, thou art there.

If I the wings of morning take, and far away my dwelling make,
the hand that leadeth me is thine, and my support thy pow'r divine.

If deepest darkness cover me, the darkness hideth not from thee;
to thee both night and day are bright, the darkness shineth as the light.

PREACHING OF THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms 139*

¹O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

²You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

³You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

⁵You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.

⁷Where shall I go from your Spirit?

Or where shall I flee from your presence?

⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there!

If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

⁹If I take the wings of the morning

and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me.

¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"

¹²even the darkness is not dark to you;

the night is bright as the day,

for darkness is as light with you.

¹³For you formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

in your book were written, every one of them,

the days that were formed for me,

when as yet there was none of them.

PREACHING OF THE WORD

¹⁷How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake, and I am still with you.

¹⁹Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!

O men of blood, depart from me!

²⁰They speak against you with malicious intent;

your enemies take your name in vain.

²¹Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

²²I hate them with complete hatred;

I count them my enemies.

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting!

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

SERMON:

“Life Matters”

Rev. Jeff Pate

COMMUNION

HYMN: "He Will Hold Me Fast"

When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.

Chorus:

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.

Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me fast;
Precious in His holy sight, He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last;
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

For my life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast;
Justice has been satisfied, He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast
Till our faith is turned to sight, when he comes at last!

Words by Ada Habershon & Matt Merker; Music by Matt Merker
©2013 Getty Music Publishing/Matthew Merker Music; CCLI license #11239744

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!**

BENEDICTION

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: 363 "We Gather Together"

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
he chastens and hastens his will to make known;
the wicked oppressing now cease from distressing:
sing praises to his name; he forgets not his own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;
so from the beginning the fight we were winning:
thou, Lord, wast at our side: all glory be thine!

We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
and pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation endure thro' tribulation:
thy name be ever prais'd! O Lord, make us free!

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 BIRTHDAYS

January 31 Caleigh Henson
February 3 Nora Crawford
February 4 Chanley Henson
February 4 Bill Hewett
February 4 Lorrie Pate

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be an congregational meeting following both morning services today for the purpose of sharing the 2021 church budget. Please plan to attend.

COVENANT KIDS CLUB & YOUTH GROUP

Covenant Kid's Club and Youth Group meet tonight from 5:30-7:00pm.

DEACON'S FUND OFFERING

Every month that has a fifth Sunday, our Deacons have an offering to replenish funds in an account used exclusively for mercy ministry needs. This fund has enabled our Diaconate to extend the kingdom of God to many within our community. This morning, all cash and designated gifts will be used for this purpose.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PIER GROUPS

Pier Groups began last week, and we hope everyone will find a place to get plugged in. There are currently five groups you can sign up for. The leaders and details for those groups are as follows:

- Robert Thornton/Jimmy Hopper: Sundays on Zoom at 4:30pm. Sermon follow-up.
- Gene Martin: Sundays at 5:30 pm on Zoom. "Chosen by God" by R.C. Sproul
- John Kim: Sundays at 5:30 pm in RPC educational building.
"A House for My Name" by Peter Leithart
- Jeff Pate: Tuesdays at 6 pm at the Pates' house. Study of Genesis.
- Allen Powers: Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. at the Staggs' house.
"Consequence of Ideas" by R.C. Sproul

You can find the sign up for Pier Groups on the church's website under the "forms and sign ups" tab. The leaders will then pass along any further information you may need.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The ladies of the church are invited to participate in a Zoom study of the new book, *Aging with Grace*, by Sharon Betters and Susan Hunt. The book is available on Amazon. The study began last week, and it takes place on Wednesday mornings at 10am. If you are interested, please send your name and email address to Bonnie Martin (bonniegene@bellsouth.net). You will be added to the email which will be sent out week by week with a link enabling you to join.

2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

Operating Income:	\$408,719.97
Operating Expense*:	\$413,860.60
Net Income:	(\$5,140.63)
Designated gifts:	\$104,899.43
Building loan balance:	\$718,864.08

**Includes the minimum monthly building loan payment*