

RIVERWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 29, 2020 • 10:30am • Rev. Jeff Pate, pastor

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Leader In Worship: Assisting Elder John Kim

Joann Williams, piano

REFLECTIONS:

God never gave a gift, but he sent occasion at one time or another to show it to God's glory. As, if he sent riches, he sendeth poor men to be helped with it.

Hugh Latimer

from a sermon preached before King Edward VI

What a revolution would come over the world – the world of starving bodies at home – the world of starving souls abroad – if something like this were the standard of giving; if God's people ventured on “making themselves poor” as Jesus did, for the sake of the need around; if the “I” – “me” – “mine” were practically delivered up, no longer to be recognized when they clash with those needs.

Lilias Trotter (1853-1928)

Artist and Missionary to Algeria

For the richer any man is, the more abundant are his means of doing good to others.

John Calvin

CALL TO WORSHIP: *from Psalm 121*

Pastor: I lift up my eyes to the hills.

All: From where does my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

All: Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Pastor: The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is the shade on your right hand.

All: The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

Pastor: The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

We come before our Triune God who is our help and our salvation. Come, let us worship!

1. Come, thou fount of ev'ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love.
2. Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wand'ring from the fold of God:
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.
3. O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander - Lord, I feel it -
prone to leave the God I love:
here's my heart, O take and seal it,
seal it for thy courts above.

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.*

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 12:13-21

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN:

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from you, and you have blessed us with many gifts. We confess that we can quickly think our lives consist in the abundance of possessions we lay up for ourselves. Please forgive us for the greed in our hearts that keeps us from being generous with people in our community. Forgive us for being more afraid of becoming financially poor than we are of being poor in good works and righteousness. As the needs of people around us grows, increase our faith in you, our Provider. Help us to be rich toward you by being generous with others. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE & PEACE OF GOD: *from 2 Corinthians 8*

Pastor: Remember the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. Through faith in Jesus, the debt for your sins has been paid. Now, you have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Thanks be to God!

HYMN: 230 "Thou Who Wast Rich beyond All Splendor"

1. Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor,
all for love's sake becamest poor;
thrones for a manger didst surrender,
sapphire-paved courts for stable floor.
Thou who was rich beyond all splendor,
all for love's sake becamest poor.
2. Thou who art God beyond all praising,
all for love's sake becamest man:
stooping so low, but sinners raising,
heav'nward by thine eternal plan.
Thou who art God beyond all praising,
all for love's sake, becamest man.
3. Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Savior and King, we worship thee.
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,
make us what thou wouldst have us be.
Thou who art love beyond all telling,
Savior and King, we worship thee.

OFFERING:

**Remember to worship through the giving of tithes and offerings using the link to online giving or sending checks to the church's mailing address.*

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: “Holy Spirit”

1. Holy Spirit, living Breath of God, breathe new life into my willing soul;
Bring the presence of the Risen Lord, to renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your Word to come alive in me; give me faith for what I cannot see.
Give me passion for Your purity; Holy Spirit breathe new life in me.

2. Holy Spirit, come abide within; may Your joy be seen in all I do.
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin in each thought and deed and attitude.
Kindness to the greatest and the least; gentleness that sows the path of peace.
Turn my striving into works of grace; Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

3. Holy Spirit, from creation's birth, giving life to all that God has made.
Show Your power once again on earth, cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise; lead us on the road of sacrifice,
that in unity the face of Christ will be clear for all the world to see.

SCRIPTURE: *Nehemiah 5:1-13*

¹Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. ²For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many. So let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive." ³There were also those who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." ⁴And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards. ⁵Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards."

⁶I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. ⁷I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them ⁸and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!" They were silent and could not find a word to say. ⁹So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? ¹⁰Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. ¹¹Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." ¹²Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised. ¹³I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

SERMON:

"Rebuilding the Community"

Rev. Stewart Swain

HYMN: 642 "Be Thou My Vision"

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art –
thou my best thought by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, I thy true son; thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.
3. Be thou my battle shield, sword for my fight; be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r: raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
4. Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, first in my heart, High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.
5. High King of heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

HAPPY BIRTHDAYS

March 31 George Norris

April 4 Lundy Arnold

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Over the coming weeks, communing members of Riverwood will have the opportunity to submit names of individuals to potentially serve as church officers. Prior to nominating someone to the officer of Ruling Elder or Deacon, take time to reflect on the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and prayerfully consider if that person is a good candidate. Also, please share with the individual your desire to nominate him and ask if he would be willing to participate in the training and examination process that would follow this nomination.

CHANGES AT RIVERWOOD

Church-related activities

All group activities will be suspended until the end of March. This includes Pier groups, Sunday School, Youth group, Bible studies, and Children's ministry activities.

Online Giving option

Please maintain your financial support of our church while we are unable to worship together in person. In order for you to worship through the giving of tithes and offerings, you may give to Riverwood online through the link on the church website. Please note:

1. You may give directly from your bank account or by credit card. There is no charge for bank account donations. The credit card option will charge Riverwood a 2.5-3.5% processing fee.
2. Donations are tax-deductible, and you will receive a giving statement directly from the PCA Foundation. Online donations will not appear on your year-end giving statement from Riverwood.

You may also mail a check to the church (501 Rice Valley Rd. North, Tuscaloosa, AL 35406). If you have any questions, please email Sarah Vander Wal (secretary@riverwoodchurch.org).

Shepherding/Pastoral Care

In the coming days, church members should expect to hear from their Shepherding Elder. He will be reaching out to ask how you are doing physically and spiritually. He will want to pray with you and find out how to best help you grow in grace and know the peace of Christ during this unsettling time. Also, if you would like an in person visit, I (Jeff) would be happy to come to you so we can meet and pray together. Please let me or your Elder know if you have a need that the church body can assist in providing.

Church-wide Care

During this time of increased separation, it is important for the entire church to live out our unity and fellowship by keeping in contact with one another. Please take time to call other members of your Pier group, bible study, or the person who sits near you in worship, and share with one another what God has been teaching you that you may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith (Romans 1:12).

At the end of March, the Session will meet again and reassess how the church will move forward. We are praying for you as we rest in Christ with you.