

RIVER NEWS



From The Pastor's Pen ~ Pastor Sarah Flack

What a wonderful Holy Week! We finished up our reading of John together, we paused on Good Friday to gather together, and then we came back together on Sunday for two Easter services. It was good to be with you all as we remembered the death, burial, resurrection, and the promised return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was good to hear the noise and see the faces that filled our church after the silence of Easter 2020.

What's next? I am already excited about our next series, "The Stories," in which we will look at several of the stories that are a part of our Christian heritage. Some of us learned these stories in Sunday school, but for many among us, these stories are not familiar. It will be good for all of us to take a look at these maybe-familiar stories together to make sure we have our facts straight about them. And, as we hear these stories that God caused to be included in the Bible, we will discover why God wanted us to know these things about Himself.

Also coming up soon will be the follow-up to our first "Hope and a Future" meeting that we held way back in October. We will look at how far we've come in six months and plan together for the future. All of our ministries are now up and running again so this will be a busy summer! As always, we are looking for project ideas, especially outreach ideas, and people to help make it happen. If you feel God calling you to lead a Bible study or serve in some way, let us know.

Many of you participated in our church-wide Lent reading plan, and it was good to hear your reports of enjoying your time in John. John 20:30-31 remind us of the purpose of this Gospel:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name.

It is my prayer that you all will believe in Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you will realize the life that you have in His name.

May God bless you and keep you this month, River Church! We have so much to look forward to.

Pastor Sarah



Grief Ministry
~ *Laura Schafer*

Changing Our Thoughts

We need to heal as we grieve. In order to begin our healing and find God's peace, we need to replace the thoughts of "what we lost" with thoughts of "what we had", "what we still have", and "what we will have in Christ." This is not done easily or quickly. We need time to process our grief. However, over time, with work and with God's help our thoughts will change.

This change of thought does not mean we forget our loss and/or loved ones. As we heal, our thoughts of our sorrow and loss will begin to bring peace and even joy.

Try making a list of good things to think about based on Philippians 4:8. This can help us to stop thinking dark and negative thoughts and start thinking positive uplifting thoughts.

True: It's true I love the one I lost. It's true that God loved that person and still does.

Honorable: It's honorable for me to bite my tongue and not speak everything I think and feel. It was honorable when others showed me kindness while I grieved.

Right: It's right for me to be kind to others while I grieve. It's right for me to choose the next right thing, even if it's just getting out of bed.

Pure: The love I receive from God is pure.

Lovely: The sunset, the birds, the river, all God's creation is lovely.

Commendable: The way you handle your loss and still show grace and kindness is commendable.

Excellent: The grace of God is excellent. God's Word is excellent.

Praiseworthy: A kind word is praiseworthy. Friends who check on you are praiseworthy. A gentle answer to a hurtful question or statement is praiseworthy.

Make a list of the blessings in your life!

Hello saints;

As I think about this address to you in this newsletter, spring is going on all around us. Although the last few days have been a little on the chilly side, the weather is far better than it was just a while ago. The days are warmer, the snow is now completely gone, and we can tell not only by the calendar but by nature that spring and new life is upon us. This is also the season of new life on our church calendar. As we reflect on the events during holy week, starting with the triumphal entry, I'm made aware of the people proclaiming Jesus' entry as the "king of Israel", "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" and they're shouting "hosanna", literally meaning Lord save us - what a glorious time that entry into Jerusalem must have been. To have been in the crowd and to be part of the crowd caught up in the excitement of seeing the very fulfillment of a scripture of promise to the Jewish people. WOW !

As the pastor said from the pulpit Sunday, this was fulfillment of not only scripture in Isaiah, but also Zachariah. But that same excitement that was there for that entry turned into an anger, disbelief, and broken expectations. We can see that their expectations were not meant by what they perceived their old testament promises to be, with what Jesus in their midst presenting to them the Messiah that has come to save and redeem his people. The same crowd that's cheering him, shouting hosanna's is overall the same crowd that is standing before pilot shouting crucify him. So brothers and sisters in Christ, my first self reflection for us this week is; are we any different than that crowd when we first believe in Jesus, coming to fully embrace him and the promises. We have so much excitement in us, like a first love and we can't hardly contain ourselves. We are much like that crowd proclaiming him King of kings and Lord of lords, excitingly turning everything over in our life to Jesus keeping. Then as time goes on (prayerfully longer than a week) do we find ourself with broken expectations, feeling that those promises are unfulfilled or that what he's supposed to be helping us with in our life - he doesn't hear us? We may not be so bold as to say crucify him, but choices that we start to make, or actions that we take and even our conversations we may engage in, actually may begin to reflect that very attitude. We may know that we should wait upon him longer, listen to him deeper, walk in obedience stronger, but our actions don't convey that so in essence, we crucify him a new.

The other thing that happens during this holy week that I want us to reflect a little upon is; when Jesus separates himself and goes up to pray saying to the disciples with him "Pray that you may not enter into temptation". The day's excitement or events, or just trying to comprehend everything that's happening leaves them tired and they try, but they fall asleep. Again Jesus comes to them asking "watch and pray". This is my second part of our reflection for this week; are we much like these disciples, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak? Our intentions are good but too soon we just fall asleep, fall way from the things that God has called us to do. To do in our home, at our workplace, in our community, amongst our church family. I can't point a finger at any fellow believer out there, because as the old saying is - if I point a finger at you there's multiple fingers pointing back at me. But, I do see this as a time for us to reflect upon the reaction of the crowd which included some of his followers, and looking at us, his present church. Are we performing many of the same choices and actions? The one sentence in Mark's gospel, when Jesus comes to the sleeping disciples and says "arise, watch and pray, could you not stay awake with me for ONE HOUR." Do we surrender to the flesh, tired flesh, hectic schedules, busyness of our life? I experienced a season in my walk with the Lord, in which I was so BUSY being about the things of the Lord that I actually "fell asleep" in my time with him. Too busy doing the things to have time with him. Of course we all know the next event, Judas approaches with a detachment, to arrest Jesus pointing him out by betraying him with a kiss.

This is a season of new beginnings, new life, fresh starts; let's try pressing in further and deeper in our walk with Jesus. We celebrate this Easter season and the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, that enables us to boldly come before the throne of God, restoring our relationship with with our heavenly Father and Creator. Let us reflect on our walk, our love, our expectation of our Savior God, and let us be one that would "watch and pray", and persevere through the course of time instead of surrendering to the temptations of this world.

Be Blessed this Holy Season - Elder Dean



Breaking the Chains

~ Ken and Michelle Kavanagh

Have You Counted The Cost Of Recovery?

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?

(Luke 14:28-30)

Though Luke 14:28-30 is in regards to counting the cost of following Christ, you can apply it to recovery as well. When a person makes the choice to make a change for the better and begin their walk in recovery, they must realize there is a cost and then be determined to finish what they began.

What is the cost of recovery? One cost is leaving your old way of life behind. Some may have to avoid certain places and functions that they were used to attending in fun, which may be a bar, gambling, certain types of parties, etc. Another cost is leaving behind certain family and friends who were part of your old ways. This is always hard for people. It doesn't mean you stop loving them or seeing them, it means you make the choice to separate yourself from the lifestyle they continue in that you are trying to recover from. Another cost is to remove things such as tv's, computers, cellphones, certain books, foods and drinks, etc, from your home depending on what you are trying to recover from.

Even though there is a cost when you make the choice to walk the road of recovery, the cost is small compared to the benefits you will receive. You will be healthier, happier, clearer, and more productive in your life. In the beginning you may not feel it or see it as much, but in time you will notice the difference. You must not allow your emotions to be a stumbling block for yourself. You must learn how to deal with your emotions so you do not go running back to your old ways when problems arise.

When you include Jesus in your recovery, you can be certain that He will see you through to the end and His healing will be permanent. He will provide comfort and strength at the exact time it's needed (Isaiah 40:28-31). When you are tempted, He will provide a way out so you can endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Do not be afraid of the cost of your recovery. It is worth it!

The Circle

~ Wendy Falzano

We are so excited to announce The Women's Circle is having their first gathering since the start of the pandemic.

After a long year and winter, we are resuming our gatherings, with the first one to be held Saturday, April 17th 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, in the fellowship hall.

We are looking forward to reconnecting and discussing our plans for future gatherings. So, put it on your calendar and come and join us! We miss seeing everyone's faces.

To protect our sisters, we are going to adhere to the state and church guidelines, so where your mask when entering the building; we will maintain social distancing during the gathering. Also, we ask everyone to bring their own beverage.

"yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign LORD is my strength!"
(Habakkuk 3:18b-19a)



What It Means To Be A Part Of RCC by Char Frese

"What it means to me to be part of the River Community Church is exactly what the name says. It is a community of believers (friends) that are there for me when I am celebrating something exciting; when I need help with something; when I need someone to pray with me; when I need someone I can cry with and just friends that I can have fun with. I feel that we are a family and are always there looking out for each other."

Men's Ministry

~ JD Flack

Don't forget to check out the new Men's Ministry board to find out all the latest news with Men's Ministry!



Adopt A Flower Bed at RCC

As the weather is changing and the outdoors is beginning to bloom again, we are seeking volunteers to adopt a flower bed at RCC! Volunteers can be individuals or families and is a great project for all ages!

The responsibilities include:

- Maintaining the bed (weeding, watering, & deadheading any flowers) May through the fall. You do not have to plant flowers but you are welcomed to do so).
- Cleaning up the flower bed in the fall.

All flower beds are to be prepared by the Saturday prior to Memorial Day Weekend, May 23, 2021.

For more information, please contact the church office. Flower beds are assigned on a first come, first serve basis but we will try to accomodate any requests.



When you see the following people, wish them a Happy Birthday!!!

04/03

Patricia Dennis

04/24

Carol Williams

04/25

Wendy Falzano

04/28

Erica Cohen

04/28

Sophia Cohen

04/29

Cathy Smashe

Church Announcements

American Red Cross Blood Drive

RCC is looking for a Coordinator for the American Red Cross Blood Drives. The volunteer will be responsible for the following:

- Being present for the entire blood drive including set up and tear down
- Insuring all CDC & NYS Pandemic Guidelines are followed by all people
- Sanitizing according to Pandemic Guidelines during and after blood the drive
- Responding to questions and needs of the Red Cross Team
- Coordinating with the church office in scheduling blood drives
- Scheduling all blood drives and canceling blood drives if needed due to weather, pandemic, or other unforeseen circumstances.

If you would be interested in becoming the coordinator, contact the church office at (315) 686-3194 or lschafer@riverchurchnny.com



Beaver Camp

If you are interested in sending your child to Beaver Camp, please stop by the church office for more information.

Greeting Cards

RCC offers a variety of handmade greeting cards for all different occasions, lovingly made by Chris Gumm, If you would like to purchase one, by donation, please let the church office or any usher or greeter know.

Wednesday Walking Group

We will begin walking again on Wednesday April 21st. Enjoy a short devotional at 9:00am or 6:00pm in the church carport prior to being dismissed to walk at Zenda Farms or a place of your choosing. All are welcomed!

A Cup of Grace Coffee House



Cup of Grace Coffee House is now open each Sunday morning before and after service. Coffee, bottled water and a light snack is available, free of charge, to anyone who would like to enjoy a light refreshment during or after service. Feel free to bring your favorite travel mug with you and let us fill it up. If you would you like to help with the coffee house by making coffee or serving on Sunday morning with a warm smile and friendly greeting, let us know!



We'd like to thank Patsy Kidwell for the beautiful homemade cross on display at the church. God has given Patsy a wonderful talent of crocheting and she utilizes her talent to bring joy to others.

