River News

From The Pastor's Pen

~ Pastor Sara Flack

Greetings to the congregation of River Community Church, near and far!

At different seasons in our lives certain Bible verses hold special places in our hearts. As a young newlywed living far from my parents and sister, in a town where it seemed like everyone was bilingual but me, I found much comfort in the words of Proverbs 3 that exhorted me to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Scripture was my companion, and in those pages I heard God's voice offering me wisdom, peace, love, and a well-timed two-by-four to the head when I was being stubborn or thinking about things in the wrong way. By God's grace, I had come to know Jesus in childhood, and God and His Word have been my steadfast friends for over three decades now. There aren't words enough to describe how thankful I am for the gift of a relationship with Him, for His faithfulness, and for His patience with me along the way. It is my fervent prayer that each one of you have a personal relationship with Jesus.

For a while now, Galatians 6:9 has held a special place in my heart: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. We have come through a season at River Community Church, a season that began several years ago, in which God reshaped who we are as a church. At the Hope and Future Follow-Up night last month, I shared with you pictures and stories of "Life At The River." While we might not look the same as we did in the "olden days" that isn't necessarily a bad thing--it's just a new thing. We can be thankful for the work God has done in and through our church in the past, and celebrate what He is doing now. It is an exciting time at The River!

My house has lots of shade and so the tulips and daffodils in my flowerbed usually bloom a week or two later than those in the flower beds around downtown Clayton. Daffodils are my favorites, and I can be a bit impatient waiting for them to finally bloom. But bloom they do, and in the perfect timing for them. It's that way with God's work in our lives and in our church. We can become impatient with the pace and timing of God's plans, even becoming discouraged if things happen differently or less quickly than we had envisioned. But He is the master gardener, and He knows what He is doing. We are individual flowers, and our church is just one garden in this vast and grand garden that He is growing. While He is working, we can continue to not become weary in doing good and look forward to the harvest that He has promised.

At our Hope and A Future follow-up, I shared with you a slogan that describes the heart of our church: "LOVE Big, GROW Deep." We are a church that seeks to LOVE big in the way we treat one another, and we are a church that seeks to GROW deeper in our relationship with God. We as a congregation are generous with our resources, with prayer, with listening, and with our time. It is an honor to serve as your pastor, to see your desire to love one another and to reach outside these walls, and I am thankful for each one of you.

(*From the Pastor's Pen continued...*)

We are always looking for ways to increase communication. If you haven't had a chance to check out our new River Community Church app for your phone, text me or give the church office a call, and we will help you get connected.

May God remind you of His power and the wonders of His plans this month.

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Sarah Flack

Grief Ministry

~ Laura Schafer

Invite Jesus With You On Your Grief Journey

Regardless of what death or loss has caused you grief, it is important that you don't walk this journey alone. Connect with other believers, but most importantly take Jesus with you on your journey.

Spend time alone with Him. In His presence tell him what you're feeling, the confusion, the anger, your grief, even cry, He already knows, share it with Him. Then stay in His presence quietly, He will meet you there, right where you are at, in the midst of your grief.

The same Jesus who wept with Mary and Martha at Lazarus death, is weeping with you. Remember one day Jesus will wipe away every tear and there will be no more grief, no more pain, no more tears and no more death for all eternity.

"T*hen I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.*"
Revelation 21:1-5

Elder Ministry

~ Dean Wilkie

May is upon us Saints, spring continues to roll in, there's no stopping it now! The past week I've been reading in the book of Hebrews, such an interesting book. ALL the books that make up The Book, are good but Hebrews is rich like a good cup of coffee.

It opens with us understanding first; God has spoken at various times and in various ways in the past to the fathers and the prophets, but in these last days he speaks to us by his son our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. As we continue to read we realize that Jesus, was "so much better" than the angels as he's obtained a more excellent name then they. When we have Jesus, why should we obsess with trusting in angels? But it doesn't stop there, as we continue to read by the time we get as far as the second chapter, we see that he has given so great a salvation, the old testament saints had a salvation through the Lord's visitations, but when Jesus, in complete obedience carried the burden of our sins on the cross, he handed down to us so great a salvation, "so much better"a salvation! He is the captain of our salvation, he is our high priest that we take our humble praise offering to the altar of God through.

Through the Old Testament and even in Jesus' day, the priest, had to stand daily before the altar making offerings, but Jesus, made our offering once and forever - "so much better" a sacrificial offering. Therefore, Jesus has become our "so much better", a priest forever. He doesn't grow old and unable to offer up our humble offerings or making intercession for us, nor does he grow old unto death. Jesus, has become a guarantee of "so much better" a covenant. The old testament is a covenant that Yahweh made with Israel, his chosen people, it also shows us the history of the God that we serve. The New Testament tells us the story of Jesus, but it is that new covenant that he has made for us that if we are obedient with the hearing of his word - we are his chosen people!

It is our prayer that his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But if we look at our earthly limitations and what Christ has done for us, those words "so much better" need to carry so much deeper meaning.

Looking at the blood of bulls n goats; "so much better" a sacrifice was the blood of The Covenant, our promise of a "so much better" (everlasting) life. Residing in"so much better" a tabernacle tent.

Oh what an act of love, oh what an act of selflessness, oh what a high priest we have, oh what a covenant promise we have, oh what a Savior !! So as we look at the world around us and we look at the goodness that is there, let us look through redemptive eyes and realize, our walk of faith is "so much better", so much greater, because of the greatness of our God.

Blessings (that are"so much better")
From our "so much better" GOD !

Elder dean

Do Not Fear

Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."
(Isaiah 35:4)

Fear is a powerful tool of emotion. It can stop a strong man dead in his tracks. It can cause a country to come under oppression. It can cause a sane person to change their behavior. It can cause a righteous person to lie. It can cause a person of authority to seek advice from the wrong people. It can make the easiest of choices become difficult to make. It can cause us to make the wrong choices for our families. Fear is a powerful adversary against the mind when it is allowed to continue. Fear, when utilized by an enemy, can steal our freedom and reduce us to an oppressed people under bondage either physically or emotionally, and sometimes both. There are many examples in the bible that shows how fear hindered many of God's servants, causing them to make wrong choices. We must learn from their mistakes.

- **Fear (and jealousy) of losing his position as king caused Saul to stop trusting his loyal servant, David, and seek to kill him, when he heard the women sing: *"Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."*** (1 Samuel 18:7). Fear also caused Saul to seek out a medium for guidance when the Lord would not answer him. This eventually led to his death. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 states: *13 So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. 14 He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.*

- **Fear caused David to change his behavior and act insane when he stood before Achish, the king of Gath.** David was running from Saul and the king's soldiers were unhappy about his being there and exposed his identity to the king. As David was very afraid of what king Achish might do to him, he acted insane in their hands, making marks on the door and had spit running down his beard (1 Samuel 21:10-13).

- **Fear and concern about not having enough provision during the famine caused Naomi's husband, Elimelech, to move his family out of the Promise Land (Bethlehem) and seek provision in the pagan land of Moab**. This means they returned through the wilderness which God had delivered Israel from hundreds of years before. Though this may have supplied a few of their needs, life was still difficult due to the famine and the end result was costly. Their sons married Moabite women (which was against God's command) and Naomi's husband and sons passed away within 10 years of moving there. (Ruth 1:1-5)

- **Fear of the consequences of going before the king without being called to him, almost hindered Esther from helping to save the Jews from death in a plot by Haman**. However, when Mordecai informed Esther that relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but she and her father's house will perish (Esther 4), Esther made the right decision. She called for a fast, went before the king and the Lord delivered them, vindicated them and the law was changed to protect the Jews.

These are but a few examples of how fear, when allowed to overcome us, can cause a person to make the wrong choice, act differently, and put other peoples lives in jeopardy including our own. Whatever is causing fear in your heart, take it to the Lord today and ask Him to remove it and to replace it with faith and trust in Him and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

RCC Announcements

Men's Ministry

Men's Ministry Breakfast and Fellowship

The Men's Ministry meets every first Saturday of the month at 9:00am for breakfast and fellowship in the fellowship room at the church. If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact J.D. Flack at 315-405-0330.

Men's Bible Study

Beginning Thursday, May 20th at 7:00pm, the Men's Ministry will hold a weekly study at the home of Sunny Mitchell. The study is titled "No More Excuses" by Tony Evans who urges men to stop looking at their circumstances as excuses and instead to see them as challenges and opportunities for success. For more information or to reserve your seat and study guide for the group, contact Sunny Mitchell by May 11th at 315-408-3763.

Thank You!

Dean Wilkie would like to thank the Men's Ministry for their help in putting up the walls on his garage. They did a great job!

The Men's Ministry is willing to do any project, great or small (up to their skill level). If you know of a project need or you would like to be a part of this great ministry, please contact J.D. Flack at 315-405-0330.

Women's Ministry

The women's ministry, the Circle, gather the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10:00am - 12:00pm. Their next meeting is Saturday, May 15th at the church.

Fellowship Meeting

The next fellowship meeting will be held on Monday, May 24th at 6:00pm. Everyone is welcomed to attend the meetings. We are currently putting together plans for our "Freedom Picnic" on July 4th after Sunday service. We will need volunteers to make this work! Other possible events include a community take-out dinner, an old fashioned ice cream social, an outside open mic night with a bonfire and a family activity night.

For more information about the Fellowship Ministry, contact Laura Schafer at the church.

Prayer and Devotional Walk

Come join us for our prayer and devotional walk every Wednesday at 9:00am or 6:00pm at the church. It's a great time to pray and receive a short devotional and get in shape!

A Cup of Grace Coffeehouse News

Keep your eyes opened for new and exciting things to come to a Cup of Grace!

CareNet News

Let's celebrate with CareNet becoming debt free after receiving a generous donation! May God continue blessing them in their work!

RCC Annual Rummage Sale

The RCC annual rummage sale will be held July 16 & 17 in the church carport. More details to follow.

News and Upcoming Events

Elder Candidate News

The period of questioning for Elder Candidates, Tom and Nancy Augliano, will conclude on May 17th. If you have any questions for them, please speak to them by this date. The next step in the process will be personal training. The congregation will be able to vote on whether to accept them as Elders at the annual meeting in July.

RCC Farmer's Market

Every Friday from July 9th - August 27th, RCC will be home place for the Farmer's Market. It will be open from 4:00pm - 7:00pm. If you are a part of the RCC family and would like to be a vendor at our Farmer's Market, just go to our webpage and fill out an application. For more information, please call the church office at 315-686-3194.

Happy Birthday to the following:

05/05	Desirus Burrows
05/07	Thom Collins
05/12	Ciara Cavanaugh
05/15	Liliana Schemerhorn
05/16	Makayla Huffman
05/19	Cameron Huffman
05/21	Carolyn Marriott
05/26	Jason Collins

Don't forget to stop by A Cup of Grace Coffeehouse for your birthday treat!