

RIVER NEWS

NOVEMBER 2022



From The Pastor's Pen

~ Pastor Sarah Flack

Dear River Community Church and friends,

Time marches on, and here we are with Christmas just around the corner. J. D., the kids, and I are thankful for another year together with you at this special place called River Community Church.

Because of J.D.'s career, we have never lived close to our families and so we have learned to find “extra” family wherever we land, first in Texas for almost seven years and now here in New York for fifteen years. My first experience at River Church was being welcomed into a co-ed Wednesday morning Bible study at Riverview Apartments. At the time I had a child in kindergarten and one that was only a few months old while everyone else around the table had grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and maybe one or two had great-great grandchildren. These women and men quickly became aunts and uncles and grandparents and cousins as we studied the Bible, prayed together, and shared our stories with one another. I’ll never forget the Christmas card exchange that happened not too long after I joined the group. I had only been there for a short time and didn’t expect any cards—they barely knew me after all! But I left the group that day with a stack of cards, many with personal messages for my young family, and the knowledge that I was loved by them.

This church was here for us when Asher came along five years later, and then again more recently when my mom died. And I know our story is not unique because during the week, I hear the prayer requests and receive the phone calls that sound like: “Pastor, I was thinking about so-and-so who comes on Sunday and sits near me, do you think they are okay?.”

All this to say, River Church, keep being you. Keep being a church that notices needs around you and reaches out to make a difference. Keep being a church of people who wake up in the night to pray for someone that God has placed on your heart. Keep being a church that welcomes those who come through the doors whether they are with us for one Sunday or a lifetime. Keep being a church that spreads the hope of Jesus in the world around you and invites the world around you to make a home here at River. And keep being a church that trusts God, knowing that He is at work around us and through us and in us.

And I will keep saying as our brother Paul said to the Christians at Philippi:

“I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:3-6)

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Pastor Sarah



ELDER MINISTRY

DEAN WILKIE

The season of Thanksgiving:

This time of year as the weather starts to turn; the trees shed their leaves and the frost is on the pumpkin, everybody begins to think of all the tastes and flavors that make up the Thanksgiving day feast.

Thanksgiving or the act of giving thanks, the Hebrew word YADAH, to the body of believers is an expression of gratitude to God. The act of giving thanks through praising Him for His grace and mercy towards us. This can be done privately, but often the biblical reference was with the gathering of the people in an assembly to offer up the sacrifice of praise, making a public acknowledgment. In the spirit of our calendar, I'd like to look at a couple of scriptures from God's word that admonish us to Thanksgiving to our Lord and Savior.

My text is from Col 3:12-17, particularly looking at verses 15-17. *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name Of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father, through Him".*

We may often express gratitude for good food, good friends, good weather, or a cornucopia of other things (Notice the reference to cornucopia, during the harvest season). There's nothing wrong with gratitude for those things, but often we confuse that common gratitude, and we dilute true Thanksgiving to a righteous God, by putting both actions at the same level of of expression. True Thanksgiving, to the Lord that meets all our needs before we are even aware of that need, should be from a genuine heart felt realization that our blessings are not from anything we do. Not from all our own doing, or power, or our brilliance, but simply from the loving kindness and grace of our heavenly Father, that loves us and He wants to bless us, His creation.

Now it's easy to be thankful when all things in our life are coming up roses, all's going well, no rough seas, no high winds, and no storm clouds. When we do experience these, we need to look to Job, as our example. In one day Job fell from the pinnacle of prosperity to the pit of poverty, his wealth and livestock were gone, his children were gone, and then his health was attacked and he suffered in ill health. Still through all of these things Job, not only did not curse God, (he did question Him, not understanding the things of God), but the Bible says he blessed God in all of his suffering.

Thankfulness should characterize our Christian life in every circumstance. Not that we're thankful FOR everything that we may experience in our Christian walk, but IN everything give thanks. That reminds me of a verse in 1 Thes 5:16-18; *"rejoice always, pray without ceasing, IN everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

I hope and pray that you all have a blessed Thanksgiving, overflowing with thankfulness to our Lord and Savior, who supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory. And I am truly thankful for you, brothers 'n sisters - saints of the Lord Most High.

In His service

Dean



GRIEF MINISTRY

LAURA SCHAFER



This is such an exciting time of year, isn't it, when we look forward to the holidays. It's Thanksgiving and then we roll right into the Christmas season. You can't miss how fast the holidays are approaching when you walk into any store. Our minds are busy making the grocery list for the big thanksgiving dinner with our tables crowded with family and friends. Then there are the plans for Christmas shopping, the decorating, parades, caroling and all the fun traditions that make the holidays merry and bright. Most of us I am sure look forward to the advent season when we go to church with our families and count down the weeks until our Savior's birth. It is such a joyful and happy time of year filled with the love of our family and friends.

All of these things are good and true. However, today I would like to challenge you to look at the holiday through a different lens. I know for myself, at the holiday season there is something missing, a hole, a void that in all honesty makes the holiday season seem a little less merry and bright. In 2012 I lost my oldest child. Even though it has been 10 years, and I put a smile on my face and do all the things those around me are participating in, the holiday season has never been the same. I know the true meaning of Christmas and know each of us need to focus on that a little more each year. That however does not change the fact that we live in a world and are surrounded by reminders of holiday traditions that can never be quite like they used to be.

Do you know someone who has lost a loved one that might find the holiday a little less joyful? Do you wonder what you can do? Perhaps, it is you that is dreading this holiday season because someone you love has gone to be with the Lord.

For those of you who wonder how you can comfort someone this holiday season. Let's look at the words found in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

"3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

Think of a time in your life when God used someone to comfort you and what meant the most to you. Be patient with those hurting, look at them through the eyes of Jesus. Spend time with them having a cup of coffee or an afternoon stroll. If you invite them to a holiday function and they decline, accept and understand without hard feelings. Be the love of Christ they need so very much this time of year.

Are you dreading the holiday season this year? Give yourself grace, it is okay to be missing those you love. Take time for yourself, do what YOU feel comfortable with. If changing those traditions makes it easier, it's okay to do things differently, if keeping things the same to honor that person you are missing helps, that's okay too. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. It is okay to say no, but I encourage you not to isolate yourself. Find that close friend or relative you can be honest and open with and spend time with them. Let them know you need a little extra support right now. Most people want to help you but don't know how. And be encouraged by these words we find in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

"13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words."

Our separation is temporary. We will be reunited with those that loved God and us one day and nothing will separate us again. Brothers and Sisters in Christ take the hope of Jesus Christ into a dark and hurting world. And may He give you His hope, peace and comfort this blessed time of year.



THE CIRCLE

*WENDY FALZANO &
CHARLOTTE FRESE*



Welcome Fall...It's beautiful colors, crisp weather and Indian summer.

As I write this (Wendy), We are visiting northern California. We did enjoy some wonderful days on the beach last week, but from what I understand, the weather there some days was even warmer than it was here. Did anyone get there last swims in the river or lake before the cold winter settles in to stay awhile?

I am missing the beautiful color changes and beautiful sunsets of the North Country that leave me in awe of the creativity of our God! If he provided these things for our pleasure here as we journey through this temporary life, I can't even imagine what He has in store for us when we get to dwell with Him on the New Earth for eternity!

Our gathering this month is scheduled for November 19th at 10:00.

Come join us for our annual apple pie making. This gathering can sometimes run a little over our 2 hour time slot depending on how well we pay attention to our cooking show host, our very own Char Freese.

It's always a fun time as we make our pies together in preparation of the upcoming Thanksgiving dinner. Again, feel free to bring daughters, granddaughters or a friend.

We do need to know how many are coming so we have enough apples. Please sign up by Sunday, November 14th if you plan on attending by contacting Char Freese or Wendy Falzano. We will then give you the recipe and let you know what you will need to bring along with you.

For those who are gluten free, you will be bringing your own flour and spices. We supply the apples (which you will cut up) and the shortening & margarine. You can bring some of your gluten free flour and other substitutions as needed.

We are inviting anyone who attends the gatherings to bring your own coffee/tea mug if possible. It is our attempt to cut back on costs for supplies and also to protect our environment. If you wish you can bring a mug to leave for use at the monthly gatherings.

Our Gatherings are the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10-12. All women are welcome!

Also, please let us know if you have some ideas for our gatherings. This is your time for fellowship and fun!





BREAKING THE CHAINS

KEN & MICHELLE KAVANAGH



FOCUS!

"... and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

This spiritual race that we run isn't always an easy one. We know that with any race, we must prepare and work hard if we want to complete the race and win the prize. Anyone who has ever trained for anything understands what it entails and remaining focused on the goal is crucial if they want to win the prize. Diligence and endurance is important and what we feed our minds, as well as our bodies, can either keep us moving forward, get us pushed out of the race or quit altogether.

We see in Hebrews verses 1-2 the encouragement to run with endurance the race that is before us. Endurance is the ability or strength to continue on, despite fatigue, stress, or other adverse conditions. Another word is stamina. It's the drive to keep going even when you feel like you can't. However, there is a phrase in verse 1 that implies focusing, and it's "looking unto Jesus".

In order for you to win this race, you must focus on Jesus. Jesus had tremendous focus when it came to completing His mission upon the cross. As we read about His life in the gospels, it's easy to see that there were many things that could have removed His focus from His mission and discouraged Him into quitting. "Not Jesus!" you say? Yes Jesus. We must remember that Jesus was made fully human in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God as we see in Hebrews 2:14-18.

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

So to be made fully human means that he suffered through the same types of things we suffer through and He set the example of what we have to do to get through it. He suffered through temptation just as we do and therefore is able to help those of us who are being tempted. How did He do it? By remaining focused on God and by utilizing the scriptures when He was tempted by the enemy (Matthew 4:1-11). When the disciples feared the storm would overturn their boat causing them to drown in Matthew 8:23-27, Jesus calmed the seas, replying: *"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"* Jesus focus was not on the storm, but on what He knew. He knew who He was in God and He knew His authority. Most of all, He knew God.

In order to win this spiritual race and to advance in your recovery, you must remain focused on Jesus and remember who you are in Him. You must know your authority and remain focused not only on your mission but in winning this spiritual race to receive the prize at the end...eternal life. When distractions come to push you out of the race, you must re-shift your focus back to Jesus and the goal of crossing the finish line. There is a difference, however, between a physical race and a spiritual race. In a physical race only one person wins the prize. In a spiritual race, all who enter the race and complete it wins the prize. Therefore we must not forget to encourage one another to continue on in the race especially when we see others are falling behind and becoming tired as we are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 - *So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.*

How is your race going? Are you running at a steady pace or are you having difficulty and falling behind? Are you keeping your focus on Christ or are you busy looking at others around and comparing yourself to them? Whatever the case, take some time today with the Lord to review your walk with Him. Ask Him to help you to keep your focus on Him and to help you to reach your goal in recovery and for eternal life. He is faithful and will help you to reach your goal.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

TERENCE FALZANO

Musicians Wanted!

The worship team is growing and looking for musicians:

1. Pianists
2. Keyboard players
3. Bass player
4. Cello violin
5. And more!

If the Lord has placed a desire in your heart to worship Him using your musical instrument, please take the first step out on faith and reach out and contact me via email at terencefalzano@riverchurchnny.com or after Sunday morning worship service.

*Christmas
Caroling*

Secondly, we will be singing Christmas carols Saturday afternoon, December 17th from 2 PM to 3:30 PM at the Salmon River mall. Anyone with a desire to sing is invited to accompany us. Bring a friend who might enjoy this outreach ministry. **There will be only one rehearsal and that rehearsal will be mandatory**

Please contact me via email or after Sunday Morning service for more information.

In Joy of serving Him!

Terence



Getting To Know You...
Jennie Fichette



Jennie (Johnston) Fichette was born and raised in Clayton, NY and grew up on Merrick St. She married Byron “Barney” Fichette on November 12, 1955 and they had two children, Sharon and Walter, 5 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. Barney passed away in 2009 and Jennie states she misses him greatly.

Jennie has been a long time member of River Community Church going back to when First Baptist Church was on John St where her mother also attended. From the time she was young, she was involved in ministry work. When she was in her teens, she used to teach Sunday School to the little children for a couple of years. She was also in the Baptist Youth Fellowship in her early teens, learned to play piano at St. Mary’s Church and would open Sunday School playing the piano. She was also in the choir. In River Community Church, Jennie is a part of the Greeter Ministry.

Jennie has had several jobs throughout the years, her first being Pearl’s Department Store where she was a clerk and sold shoes. She has also worked at Big M and Grand Union, was a Meter Maid for the Clayton Police Department and a Crossing Guard. Her current employment is a volunteer driver for the Volunteer Transportation Center. Jennie states, “I love my clients and I get to share the Word with them.” Jennie has also volunteered in the community from working in a parade for Clayton Celebrates Summer for 2 years to a fundraiser where she organized a variety show. She also volunteered at blood drives for the American Red Cross.

Jennie was a member of The Country Classic Cloggers and both she and Barney were members of The Black River Fiddlers where Jennie would also sing. She remembers fondly how much she and Barney loved to dance. Jennie’s current hobbies are knitting and paint by numbers.

Since the age of 8 years old, Jennie has had heart problems. At the age of 29, her heart was so bad that the doctors had little hope for survival and encouraged her to have open heart surgery. She had the surgery and received numerous units of blood. Jennie attributes her faith in God for getting her through that difficult time of her life and recalls a moment she had in ICU after the surgery. “I remember waking up and the room being very bright. I knew the Lord was with me and He ministered to me that I would go home and have a full life.” This was a profound moment in her faith.

Jennie has lived a full life and is grateful to the Lord for that. She shares her apartment with her bird, Shelby, who is very animated and expressive and brings her much enjoyment.

Jennie, thank you for your service and we are grateful you are a part of the RCC family!



Share A Blessing Ministry

Welcome to Share a Blessing Ministry. Items in this section are donated and are free. You may also check the bulletin board at the church. This is on a first come first serve basis.

If you wish to donate an item, it must be in good condition and working. Send an email with a photo and any comment you want to add, to Laura at the email below.

If you are interested in any items in this section, you can contact the church office at 315-686-3194 or email: lschafer@riverchurchnny.com

Holmes General Purpose Air Purifier
The box has never been opened.

40 inch Panasonic TV



Kitchen Wall Art



Blessing Ministry Need:

We have someone in need of a women's large knee length winter coat.

Pastor Appreciation

In October we took a moment to honor Pastor Sarah Flack for Pastor Appreciation month followed by a luncheon after service. We are thankful for her service to the Lord and her loving and compassionate ways. We are grateful for the wisdom she imparts through her sermons.

Thank you Pastor Sarah for all that you do for your flock. We love and appreciate you!





Church Happenings



TOYS FOR TOTS

We are accepting donations through Sunday, December 4th. The drop box is located in the lobby at River Community church. For monetary donations or to apply for toys, please contact: Michelle Tinsley at 315-405-1730 or email jefferson.ny@toysfortots.org

Christmas Decorating Night

River Community Church will hold it's annual Christmas Decorating Night on Monday, November 21st at 5 PM. Food will be provided. Join us to help prepare our building for the holiday season and enjoy a great time of food and fellowship. For more information call the church office.

Ugly Christmas Sweater and Potluck Luncheon

Ugly Christmas Sweater and potluck luncheon Sunday will be held Sunday November 27th. Wear your best ugly Christmas sweater to church and bring a dish to pass and we will kick off the advent season with a fun gathering after church service. For more information contact Laura Schafer.

Community Events

Clayton Council of Churches Food Pantry

The Clayton Council of Churches Food Pantry is now open in-person Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00. Other times are available by appointment.

Clayton Council of Churches Thanksgiving Service

Clayton Council of Churches Thanksgiving Service will be held on Sunday, November 20th at 3:00 PM at the Christ Episcopal Church in Clayton. Everyone is invited to attend.



The next food sense pick-up will be Thursday, November 17th.



Church Talent



Some of our crafty ladies made pumpkins for our children and shut-ins. We are so grateful for the way our congregation blesses others utilizing the gifts God has given to them!



Another talented sister made these pot holders to add a personal touch to our welcome bags. What a blessing this will be to those who receive them!



Staying In Touch

For those who wish to remain in touch with Carolyn Marriott, she has provided her mailing address. She would love to hear from you!

Carolyn Marriott
Symphony at Stuart
4900 SE Willoughby Blvd.
Apt 116
Stuart, Florida 34997



On November 11th, we celebrate Veterans Day by remembering and honoring all service members in the Armed Forces, past and present, for the sacrifice they made to keep our nation safe and free. They went where others feared to go and did what others could not do. They faced what was before them to protect what was behind them. They understand that with freedom comes responsibility. They missed out on special events of their home life to ensure families could continue celebrating those events.

It takes a special type of person to be a member of the Armed Forces. It takes one who is vigilant, active and brave. One who envisions freedom and will do what it takes to preserve it for all. One who is able to adhere to the mission until that mission is complete even if it means the loss of their life. In the words of our great Savior, Jesus Christ, in John 15:13:

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Though a veteran eventually separates from the military, the heart of that veteran will always remain, valuing the freedom they and many others, fought and died for. May we never take for granted that freedom.

On Veterans Day, and everyday, we are thankful and grateful for all of our veterans, past and present, and say thank you for your willingness and act of selfless love to protect our country and ensure that we remain free.



11/05 Terry Falzano
11/08 Gary Hampson
11/16 Julie Larkin
11/23 Charlotte Frese
11/30 Noah Lowe

Recipe:
Acini Di Pepe Salad
by: Charlotte Frese

1 cup dry Acini di Pepe pasta
1 can crushed or pineapple tidbits
1 large can mandarin oranges
3/4 cup sugar
2 tbsp flour
3 eggs
1 large container Cool Whip

1. Measure out 1 cup dry Acini di Pepe pasta (looks like tapioca in the box). Cook according to package directions & drain.
2. Drain 1 can crushed or tidbits pineapple and the large can of mandarin oranges into a bowl. Save the juice and put the drained fruit in the refrigerator over night.
3. In sauce pan add juice from drained fruit, 3/4 cup sugar, 2 tbsp flour and 3 eggs. Cook using a whisk until it looks like cooked pudding. Add your pasta to the pudding and mix well. Refrigerate overnight.
4. The next day add drained fruit and 1 large container of cool whip. Serve cold.