

# River News

## May 2022



*From The Pastor's Pen*  
~ Pastor Sarah Flack

Dear River Community Church family and friends,

In the earlier days of our country, circuit preachers were common as more and more of the country became settled and churches were built. These traveling ministers would ride from church to church, sharing God's Word and caring for the needs of each congregation. It wasn't unusual for a circuit preacher to be away from home for weeks at a time.

One of those traveling preachers was Reverend Josiah Kelly (J. K.) Alwood. He and his wife Elizabeth had seven children together; after she died, he remarried and had one more child. Reverend Alwood worked as a carpenter to support his family until 1857 when he surrendered to the call to preach for a circuit of churches in Ohio and Michigan. He spent many a lonely week on the road away from his family and home. One particular fall evening in 1879 as he was returning home, tired from his work, he noticed in the sky a single dark cloud with a beautiful rainbow in front of it. This rare phenomenon, called a moonbow, so inspired Reverend Alwood that he wrote the song "The Unclouded Day." The lyrics of this song remind Christians of the future that awaits us beyond the struggles of our life here on earth. Churches today still sing this song, and it remains a call to believers to "*hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*" (Hebrews 10:23).

*1 O they tell me of a home far beyond the skies, O they tell me of a home far away; O they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise; O they tell me of an uncloudy day.*

Refrain:

*O the land of cloudless day, O the land of an uncloudy day. O they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise, O they tell me of an uncloudy day.*

*2 O they tell me of a home where my friends have gone, O they tell me of that land far away, Where the tree of life in eternal bloom, Sheds its fragrance thro' the uncloudy day. [Refrain]*

*3 O they tell me of a King in His beauty there, And they tell me that mine eyes shall behold Where He sits on the throne that is whiter than snow, In the city that is made of gold. [Refrain]*

*4 O they tell me that He smiles on His children there, And His smile drives their sorrows all away; And they tell me that no tears ever come again, In that lovely land of uncloudy day. [Refrain]*

3 O they tell me of a King in His beauty there, And they tell me that mine eyes shall behold Where He sits on the throne that is whiter than snow, In the city that is made of gold. [Refrain]

4 O they tell me that He smiles on His children there, And His smile drives their sorrows all away; And they tell me that no tears ever come again, In that lovely land of uncloudy day. [Refrain]

What hope this song brings, hope that is based on nothing less than our faithful God who keeps His promises! My prayer, River Church, is that you carry this song and this hope in your hearts and that it lights your way forward on the good days, the bad days, and all the days in between.

Yours in Christ Jesus, Pastor Sarah



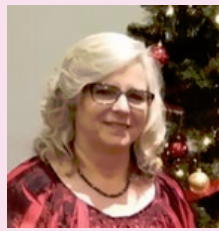
*Elder Ministry*  
~ Dean Wilkie

Blessings in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ all saints of God. As I've been thinking and reflecting upon what I may bring to the letter this month, I can't help but observe all the activity going on outside. Life is springing up all over! As the grass is getting greener (and actually at the time I'm putting this together it's green). This makes me reflect upon our just coming thru the Easter season - that observance of rebirth, and as I look around the spring, everything here is rebirth, rejuvenation. It's evident in God's nature life that has gone through it's season of sleep is now experiencing its rebirth; breaking the ground, or the trees are budding to do what is God's purpose for them to do. Each tree or plant has a reason and they enthusiastically embrace it during this regrowth season. This is not unlike our generations before us as they did the very same thing in Spring house cleaning. It was the time to pull everything out, hang the carpet on the line and beat it with a carpet beater! To rejuvenate the state of that household shake off the dusty old particles and look new again. This is not unlike what we as Christians need to do continually. We don't need to wait for a season, as long as we are in Christ, we are a new creation, we are born again every day to the power of the Holy Spirit. This should be a rejuvenating process in our life on this earth, and in our walk with our Lord and Savior.

In my 25 years with the United States Postal Service, since the making of the Star Wars saga movies I have lightheartedly celebrated what I think should be a national holiday, the 4th of May. Now you ask why; in the movie they had a mantra or phrase that they used where the Jedi knights would say "may the force be with you". Well I'm going to say to you - May the force(spirit) of God through the Holy Spirit be with you and enable you to be all that God has called you to be. I will end by saying (as I have for years) - May the fourth/forth be with you!

Be blessed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, ever pressing to be obedient to his will for your life. Trust in Him in all things, lean on him in the hard times, rejoice in him in the good, seek him thru all things, knowing that you are his child and his heart's desire for you is good.

In Christ's service - Dean



## *Grief Ministry*

*~ Laura Schafer*



### **Food (Scripture) for Thought**

Some questions I have been asked are “Should I try to talk to my loved one through a medium?” and “what harm is there in going to a medium?” Many people are tempted to turn to mediums and psychics during their grief journey, so let’s take a look together at what God’s Word tells us about seeking mediums.

*“I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people. “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy. Leviticus 20:6-8*

*“He sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.” 2 Chronicles 33:6*

How can we know if a spirit is “from God” or not? 1 John 4:1-6 can help us with this:

*“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now. You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world. Therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.”*

Keep in mind our instructions from God in Colossians 2:6-8;

*“Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with gratitude. Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.”*

Where should we look to find our comfort and hope:

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10*

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Revelation 21:4*

Let this be our prayer:

*“Make Your ways known to me, Lord; teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; I wait for You all day long.” Psalm 25:4-5*



*Getting To Know You...*  
*Carol Williams*

**What it's like when your son dies**

**A testimony by Carol Williams**

He was 55. A brain tumor, a glioblastoma, a very fast growing tumor. He was diagnosed March 19th, surgery the next day and died on June 6th, he didn't even have three months.

Our first reaction was "why him?" and "why not us?" Bob and I were both 80 at the time. Doesn't seem fair, does it? The surgeon said he might have a year; I wailed, "I know what happens, they suffer through the chemo, the radiation and the physical therapy and in the end it's all for naught."

I must clarify this part right away, I do not blame God nor am I mad at God. I cling to my faith, it will see me through this. This horrible process of grieving; tears, tears and more tears, not so many now as in the beginning but they still come. Every day when the mail came with the sympathy card, I cried my heart out, I am so grateful for the out pouring of love. And then the telephone, for weeks it seemed I couldn't talk on the phone. It was easier to write to people than to talk on the phone. People don't know what to say, so often they say nothing. Sometimes saying nothing is the best. I found after awhile that I had to be the one to "carry the ball" of conversation. Eventually I had to reach out to friends to suggest we go somewhere or do something together, like I had to say "O.K. we're ready now." Some days I feel like I've made good progress and then there will be days where it seems like I'm right back at the beginning. Church is very hard, music always has gotten to me, but now more so than ever.

I try to keep busy sometimes I'm doing things that don't even need doing, just to keep busy. It helps making cards it is therapeutic. Reading helps, if I can lose myself in a good novel. Some nights I don't sleep well but thanks to medicine, most nights aren't too bad. If I have a bad night I usually get up and make tea and read my bible that helps. I am trying to do for others, they say that's the best cure for depression, so I send a lot of cards, make phone calls and try to do for others. My kids tried to get me to go to see my doctor and my pastor, I feel this is something I have to do by myself. I like to think of myself as a strong person. God, give me strength, give me grace and dignity. I guess I'm just a private person. My neck has bothered me a lot but I feel it's due to tension and stress. It is much better now than it was before.

I am so glad Bob was still alive. I don't know how either of us would have gotten through this if we didn't have each other. And all the kids and grandkids have been so supportive.

Our good friend June lost her dear husband, Grant, just a couple weeks before Chuck died so we try to console each other. They lost a daughter at 13 due to an accident so she knows what we're going through. She says losing a child is worse than losing a husband.

It's funny how I know so many people that have lost a child and when I see them I think to myself, "she knows what it's like." Then I think of Ezra and Alice who lost all three of their sons and how did they ever cope with that? Their strong faith got them through it, that's for sure.

Tom, now so often reminds me of Chuck, especially when he's dressed up in church. I keep telling him he works too hard and he does haying in the hot, hot sun. I've already lost one son and I don't want to lose another.



*Carol Williams testimony cont...*

They say you never get over this, you just get used to it. I'm sure that's true but I'm not there yet, still can't believe he's really gone. Carol Garnsey's poem is very comforting. She says Chuck touches the hand of the Savior today and then she says when it's time to join him his shining face will meet us at the door. So very comforting. Beautiful!

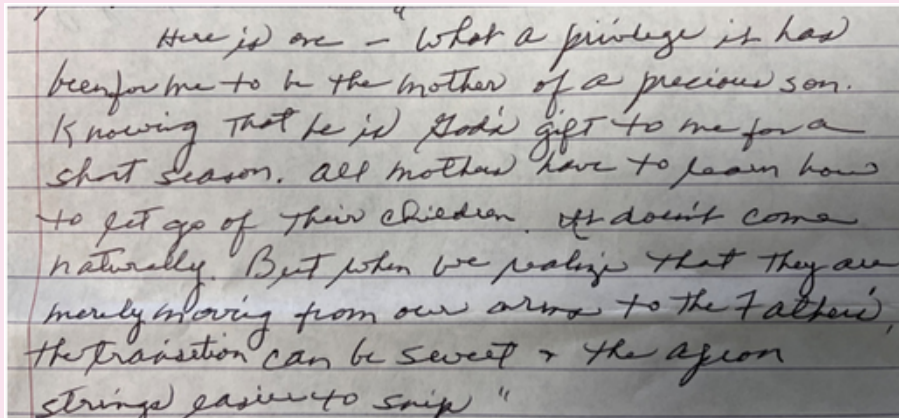
I think about what other people say about me when they see me. "Oh! She lost her son" or "she seems to be doing better" or "this must be a bad day for her." When I go out I put on my happy face and then try to cry only when I'm alone, but I don't always accomplish that.

Gardening is therapeutic. It "mirrors my moods" from a Dream of Wolves by Michael White.

We managed to get through the holidays, it was very, very hard. I pray that they get easier each year. We celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary without Chuck. Bob always seemed to be able to talk about Chuck better than I. It's funny how he remembers totally different things in Chuck's life that I don't remember.

In a bible study on adversity we have talked about testimony. "You can't give a testimony without a test", well, I feel I have certainly been tested, but I can't give a testimony. It is still so painful to talk about and I feel guilty about that. Perhaps with more time, someday, I will be able to tell my story and relate how the Lord has changed my life.

A long time ago Chuck and Chris gave me a beautiful set of wind chimes which hang on the front steps. Every time I hear their sweet melody I say "Chuck is playing music for me." Almost a year after Chuck's death, every so often I would read something that is thought provoking and helps me to organize in my mind my thoughts regarding Chuck's death. Here is one:



Here is one - "What a privilege it has been for me to be the mother of a precious son. Knowing that he is God's gift to me for a short season. All mothers have to learn how to let go of their children. It doesn't come naturally. But when we realize that they are merely moving from our arms to the Father's, the transition can be sweet & the agonizing strings easier to snap."



*Breaking The Chains Biblical Recovery Ministry*  
~ Ken & Michelle Kavanagh

## **Patience In The Process**

*22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*  
(Galatians 5:22-23)

For the last 10 years or so, I have canned foods on and off. I'm not consistent with it, but when I decide to can the foods again, I always review the directions to make sure I don't forget a step and to ensure the canning is done properly to avoid botulism. Botulism is a disease of the nervous system acquired from spoiled foods in which botulin is present, especially improperly canned or marinated foods. It can be fatal at times. So cutting corners in canning is never a good thing. But as I once again reviewed my instructions and watched some videos on certain foods to can, I notice more videos and articles where a step or two may be left out with comments such as "been doing this for years and nothing has happened yet." or "this is the way my grandmother did it and she lived to be 100!" That may be, but there can always be that one case where someone is not so lucky, or worse yet, they may share their goods with others and make them sick as well. So proper processing of canned foods is essential to avoid serious illness or worse.

Sometimes we may leave certain ingredients out of a recipe or substitute one ingredient for another that is lower in fat. Though the final product may be ok, in some recipes it may change the texture or taste of a food and sometimes may even ruin the food altogether such as not raising properly. Sometimes when we are in a hurry and the baking or cooking is taking to long, we may try to speed it up or cut it slightly short causing the food to not taste as well or be undercooked or overcooked. This is all because we did not want to follow the directions thoroughly or allow the processing to be complete.

When we are trying to heal from something or overcome an addiction, we must be patient, follow what God says in His Word, and allow the process to be completed. Not everyone heals or overcomes at the same rate. So we must not compare ourselves to others nor should we allow people to set a time limit on us. This doesn't mean we stretch out the process because we don't want to give up our habit or heal quickly (as our situation can become a comfort zone), but it means we must learn to be patient as God works with us and restores us back to good health, whatever that may be for each person (emotionally, physically, spiritually). If we skip some of His scripture because we do not want to take the time to do it, or we add something or take away something and change what He has told us to do, we may not heal properly. We may think we are ok and seem ok and even pass along the advice to others, but we may not see the true damage until later on down the road when something triggers us and we can't handle the situation as well as we could have if we had continued doing what God had said to do in His Word. We could also hinder or harm others in their healing as well if we passed on wrong information that adds more to God's instructions or takes away from it. Following God's Word as He intended is extremely important in overcoming any addiction, healing from past and current hurts, or dealing with our problems.

Romans 5:3-5 states:

*3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

Not only do we need patience, but we need endurance as well. The dictionary states that endurance is the ability or strength to continue to last especially despite fatigue, stress or other adverse conditions. The more you allow yourself to process through your situation and not take shortcuts or cut short the healing process, the stronger you will become and the more you will be able to handle and walk through your situation. It will build and strengthen your character to produce God's character in you, the

fruit of the Spirit. Your faith in God to help you will be tested during your process, and the Word of God states that your endurance will grow when your faith is tested, so let it grow! We can find this and the reason we should allow it to grow in James 1:3-4:

*3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*

If we cut the process short or add to or take away from God's instructions for our lives, we may not see that growth or receive the full healing we desire. But when we fully stick with God's instructions in our situations, and follow what He tells us to do we can expect, in time, to receive healing for our heart and mind and/or overcome any problem or addiction.

Take some time to think about where you are at in your healing process or situation. Are you doing what God is telling you to do according to His Word though it may be different from what the world is telling you to do? Are you adding in some worldly ways or ideas or are you cutting out some of the instructions to try and shorten the process? Are you receiving help from and listening to godly people or are you listening to and mixing in ideas and ways that are worldly? Take a moment and ask God to show you where you're at in the process, and then allow Him the time to show you. You won't regret it.



## **Taking a Look Back in Time...**

As Clayton celebrates it's sesquicentennial, let's take a look back at our church history.





## Lighted Cross

We'd like to thank Jill Valadez for sending us the wonderful pictures of the lighted cross on our church. The lighted cross stands out beautifully and is a beacon of light for those in need.



## The Church Hawk



## The Church Deer



## Men's Bible Study

A Men's Bible Study will be held on Thursday nights at 7:00pm at the home of Sunny Mitchell. The study is called "Kingdom Men Rising" by Tony Evans.

If you wish to attend or would like more information, please contact Sonny Mitchell.

## Youth Group

Our youth meets Sunday evenings in the Cornerstone. The Cornerstone is a great place to visit, have meetings or study.



Come join us for Movie Night on May 22nd at 6:00pm at the River Community Church!

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

A Cup of Grace will be open for you to enjoy some free snacks!





05/03	Trevor Gydesen
05/05	Desirus Burrows
05/07	Thom Collins
05/12	Ciara Cavanaugh
05/15	Liliana Schemerhorn
05/20	Rick Gydesen
05/21	Carolyn Marriott
05/26	Jason Collins
05/28	Amanda Dashler



05/27/06 John & Charlotte Frese



*Congratulations to Sonny and Susie Mitchell on the birth of their granddaughter, Remi Jayne!*



River Community Church will hold a Memorial Day Luncheon on Sunday, May 29th after Sunday Service.

The church will provide hamburgers, hotdogs and beverages, but...

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

We are in need of the following:

- Prep on Saturday, May 28th
- Help with grilling the meat
- Provide a grill
- Provide a side dish
- Provide a dessert

If you are able to help with any of the above, please contact the church office at 315-686-3194.

**Community Events**



For Your Information:

Tent Revivals of Upstate NY will be hosting a series of tent meetings.

These Old Time Gospel Meetings will be held rain or shine on

May 19-21 @ 6 PM

May 26-28 @ 6 PM

at the Adams Fire Department

6 N. Main Street Adams NY

for more information: [tentrevivalsusny.org](http://tentrevivalsusny.org)



River Community Church sponsored the kids table at the annual Spring Boat Show.

Keep your eyes open for other sponsorships and local events.



*A Patient Work*  
*Seth & Kaitlyn Sanford*  
*Missionaries*



*Below are some highlights from Seth and Kaitlyn on their current work in the missionary field of Konomala.*

"Let's be honest. All too often we expect God to work within our time frames and within our step by step expectations. Then we feel frustrated when things don't go the way we expect in our own lives or in the lives of people around us. We get so easily distracted by doing things for God that we forget to be with Him.

We can be thankful that God is such a good Father. He so patiently works in us, and He gives so much grace as we fumble our way through things in our own strength ... only to come back to Him when we finally remember that we actually have nothing to offer. All He wants is to be close to us and live His life through us.

God has been reminding us again in our own lives ... He has never asked us to go out and do a bunch of things for Him. He has only ever wanted us to come to Him, rest, and let Him live through us.

The easy days of learning an unwritten language are behind us now! That's exciting and relieving, but the battle is far from over. The core things that we must rest in haven't changed at all. We've shifted our focus from language to the real-life work of patiently leading our friends towards the things that are true...towards their good Father who deeply wants to bring them into perfect intimacy with Himself.

Our effort and knowledge play a very small part in what comes next. People's hearts can only change as they say "yes" to the truth in God's word and become acquainted with Him in a real and deep relationship. That requires a personal and daily decision on each individual's part. God patiently works in us all, and He teaches us so much as we learn to be with Him and patiently help others do the same.

What's next? Keep meeting with a small group of people to really work through things in preparation for teaching more of our friends here in the community. Even though every detail of what comes next isn't perfectly clear yet, we are confident that God knows what is best for the people He loves here in Konomala. We are leaning into God and trusting that He will make things clear as we keep moving forward. He wants us to stop striving in our own strength ... He wants us to rest and look to Him.

Prayer needs:

That we grow more in our own knowledge of our good Father and that we personally choose to rest in Him and take our eyes off of ourselves and that we would live this out well in our families and as friends. That we would lean into God for wisdom in how to lead our friends into the same deep relationship with their good Father. That God would soften peoples' hearts towards the truth and towards the life that Jesus is offering them. Satan is not resting in his battle for those same hearts.

CARE  NET

## **BabyBottle Campaign**

The Care Net Baby Bottle Campaign is an annual opportunity for local churches to fill baby bottles with pocket change. Money collected goes toward helping Care Net provide abortion alternatives to local women.

If you would like to participate in this important fundraiser for Care Net, baby bottles are available on the table outside of the sanctuary.

Collection will be from May 8 - June 26. Volunteers are needed and welcome to help count and roll donations the week of June 26.



"Adopt a Flower Bed" is a seasonal opportunity for individuals or a group to adopt one of the numbered flower beds at RCC.

What is involved in adopting a flower bed?

- Maintain 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.

If you would like to adopt a flower bed, complete the bulletin insert and drop it in the box outside the sanctuary or contact the church office. Flower beds are assigned on a first come, first served basis but we will try to accommodate any requests.

