

RCC NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023



From The Pastor's Pen
~ Pastor Sarah Flack

Happy Thanksgiving, River Community Church!

I recently came across an article about gorillas and the sounds they make while eating. Scientists have observed both wild gorillas and gorillas in captivity making two types of sounds as they eat: a low-frequency humming sound and a series of random mismatched notes (sort of an improvised song). The head gorilla of the group will make these sounds to let the others know that it is time to eat, and then the group will also vocalize to express their contentment with the food. Gorillas have been noticed singing louder in response to their favorite foods. What is especially neat is that God has given each gorilla a distinct voice so that a group of gorillas eating makes up a sort of gorilla choir.

It makes me think that God must delight in hearing the voices of His creation enjoying what He has provided for them. Imagine if, as we had our meals, we made up little songs of thanksgiving for our food. “Thank you, God, for this sandwich, it really hits the spot....” If the gorillas can do it, why not us?

Listen to what Scripture says about songs of thanksgiving:

- 1 *Come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.*
- 2 *Let us come to Him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to Him.*
- 3 *For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods. (Psalm 95, NLT)*

It’s when we make a habit of thanking God for things we often take for granted—food to eat, a warm place to sleep, shoes to protect our feet, and all those other “little” things that we need—that we begin to realize how much God does for us without us even asking or noticing. And as we begin to notice and thank God for those things, it helps us realize that God really does love us, care for us, and walk beside us.

In Luke 19, we are told of Jesus entering Jerusalem and the crowd of the disciples “*praising God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen*” (Luke 19:37, CSB). The Bible says that some of the Pharisees told Jesus to scold His disciples for shouting out “*Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!*” (Luke 19:38-39). I’ve always loved the reply Jesus gave to the disapproving Pharisees: “*I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out*” (Luke 19:40). The praise of the people was good, and even more than that, it was appropriate, as praise toward God always is.

So, River Church, be like the singing gorillas. Praise God so that the rocks don’t have to. He is worthy of it all.

Yours because of Jesus,

Pastor Sarah





Elder Ministry
~ Tom Augliano

Hello River Church family and friends. Wow! Summer is behind us and Autumn is with us. Hello November! It's harvest season and a time to give thanks. Apple cider, apple crisp, apple pies (with a nice piece of sharp cheese), pumpkin pies, pumpkin spice lattes, fresh squash, and I could go on.... I'm sure you can think of many things that just shout- FALL! And of course November culminates with the wonderful American tradition and history of Thanksgiving. A time to thank God for His many blessings.

He has blessed us as a church by being able to reach out to our community with our weekly Panera bread days, and our monthly Community Dinners. Just a couple weeks ago we had our October Community Dinner here at the church with Turkey and all the "fixings". The fellowship hall was full of people and the take-outs were flying out the door. A huge thank you to all of you who go to Panera and get and bag the bread each week, and all of you who donate food, deserts, and plan, prepare, cook and work our monthly Community Dinners. What a great way to demonstrate and share the love of Christ to our community and the message of the blessing of fellowship and God's provision for us! Another thing we can be thankful for as a church is Pastor Sarah's Ordination Service. It was a beautiful and worshipful celebration of Pastoral Ordination. Congratulations Pastor Sarah! We are grateful and thankful for your Pastor's heart and ministry here at RCC, and the blessing that you and JD and family are to all of us. "GOD HAS PROVIDED."

During this season of Thanksgiving let's look at one of God's greatest blessings that we as Christians can be thankful for: GOD's HOLY PROVISION!

In Genesis 22:2 we find this powerful story of Abraham when God said to him, *"Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."* Being obedient to God's command Abraham made preparations for the sacrifice, and on the third day he saw the mountain. As Isaac and his father were walking towards Mount Moriah, Isaac said, *"Father, the fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"* Abraham said, *"My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering."* And as Abraham was about to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, the Angel of the Lord stopped him, and God Himself provided a substitute sacrifice for Isaac - a ram, caught by its horns in a thicket.

So Abraham called that place *"The Lord Will Provide."* And to this day it is said, *"On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."*

Abraham had a strong faith in God, and he knew that *"God would provide."* It was Abraham's faith that God credited to him as righteousness. Notice, it wasn't Abraham's works that God credited to him as being righteous. It was his FAITH! Abraham went up on Mount Moriah with a strong faith in that God would provide Himself a sacrifice. And Abraham's faith proved true. God provided for Abraham.

And two thousand years later, in the same place, God provided for Himself a sacrifice - for you and me- His only begotten Son, Jesus, our Messiah, who was crucified on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins -yours and mine. He paid the debt for our sins that we could never pay and became our substitute on the cross at Calvary (Mount Mariah). To demonstrate His Deity, that He is indeed our Messiah (God in the flesh), Jesus rose from the dead three days later.

GOD's PROVISION for us: His only begotten Son, who conquered sin and death. Because God provided Himself a sacrifice for us, we now have direct access to God through Jesus Christ. *"For God so loved the world (you and me) He gave His only begotten Son (God's Provision), that whoever believes in Him (Faith) shall not perish, but will have everlasting life (Hope). God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* (John 3:16-17)

We are saved by Grace through faith (in Jesus) and not of works, lest anyone could boast. Back to Abraham... it was Abraham's faith in God that was credited to him as righteousness, and not his works. And it is your faith in Jesus (God Himself has provided for you a sacrifice), and when you put your faith and trust in what God Himself has provided for you in His Son, Jesus, you receive His most amazing gift- His gift of Salvation! For *"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* (Rom. 10.9)

So be encouraged. Here are some things God has provided for us in Christ Jesus:

- He has saved you from hell
- He brought you out of darkness into His glorious light
- He has forgiven you all of your sins
- He has filled you with His Holy Spirit
- He has guided you and protected you and has healed you spiritually, and for many of us physically
- He will never leave nor forsake you
- and He is preparing you for Kingdom's Glory with Him in Heaven.

In a few weeks we will be celebrating Thanksgiving. Have some cranberry with turkey, some of "aunt Ruth's" fruit and jello mold, a nice piece of pie and maybe even a pumpkin spice latte, and let me encourage you during your prayer time to thank God for His Holy Provision for us all! Praise God, Jehovah-Jireh- My Provider!





Grief Ministry
~ Laura Schaefer

Giving Thanks

It is easy to be thankful when life is as it should be, or at least as we think it should be. As thanksgiving approaches many of us may find ourselves less thankful this year. Perhaps we are missing a loved one that is no longer here, maybe finances are bad this year or a relationship or job has ended.

God is our loving Father, but he never promised us life without hard times, actually He said just the opposite. *"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

Hard times and bad things will happen to us in this evil and fallen world we live in. Regardless of what situation you are in or how it happened, remember what we are told in James 1:2 *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."* No matter what you are going through, rejoice in the Lord. Don't rejoice for your loss; rejoice because God has given you strength to overcome this. Rejoice because Christ is right there with you. Rejoice because *"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning."* Psalm 30:5

Remember to thank God for the "little things" daily. Maybe today you could smile at that memory instead of crying. Maybe today you could get dressed and have coffee with a friend. God is there even in the "little things." As believers we must be thankful in ALL things, the big and the little, the good and the bad. *"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"* Ephesians 5:19-20

So, no matter what you face: a trial, a time of blessing, a testing of your faith, even a situation you got yourself into, recognize Christ wherever you are on your journey and be thankful for the strength He has given you to endure and the blessing and restoration waiting on the other side of the situation, the battle has already been won in Jesus. *"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Romans 8:37-39

What are you thankful for today?





Women's Ministry
~ Wendy Falzano & Charlotte Frese



12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3:12

Congratulations to Pastor Sarah on her ordination.! Well deserve! I am so glad they had it live on facebook so I could watch it while out of town. (If you did not get to be there or watch it, you can go to the facebook page and watch it)

How blessed we are to have Pastor Sarah to set an example for us of what it looks like to walk out your faith. She is a good teacher and a wonderful role model.

One of our sisters had this to say about the ordination....

"Reverend Pastor Sarah's Ordination was beautifully conducted! We are all so VERY proud of all that our Pastor has accomplished and the grace with which she completed her work. The River Community Church is blessed by God's right hand and we are grateful to have Reverend Flack as OUR Pastor! May God continue his work and hold us all in the palm of His hand through the shepherding of Pastor Sarah."

Someone asked me why we did not do something to honor Pastor during Pastor Appreciation month. It was because she said we were showing our appreciation by supporting her through her ordination and were joining her in celebrating that milestone. She did not want a second recognition. (my paraphrase).

A suggestion would be that whenever the Lord lays Pastor Sarah on your heart, lift her up in prayer and send her an email or note of encouragement.

Samaritans Purse Christmas Boxes – Lillian and Char are facilitating the collection of the Christmas Boxes this year. You can see them about getting a box to fill, grab one you have or a plastic one the same size and fill it up. It is so appreciated by the recipients and is a great ministry to share God's love. The deadline for handing it in is Sunday, November 19th.

REMINDER, our **Annual Pie Making** will be this month's Circle gathering. November 18, 2023 9:30 a.m. (Please note the change in time for this event. We are starting earlier to allow enough time to finish by noon.) There will be a signup sheet on the Women's Ministry Bulletin Board, or contact Wendy or Char. We need to have a head count by November 5th so we can make sure we have enough apples and to get you the list of spices / ingredients and tools to make your pie. (if you are gluten free, you get to bring your own GF flour!)

We always schedule this event around the Thanksgiving holiday so you have a pie for your dinner at home or to bring to that dinner away. (But be warned, it has been the experience of many that the pie seems to disappear before Thanksgiving gets here!). It freezes well too! If you don't need the apple pie for any of your holiday gatherings, I hear there is a Community Dinner at the River Community Church in Clayton the third Monday of every month and they are always looking for desserts! Come join us for some pie making fun!!

December is our cookie exchange. Remember to put it on your calendar. December 16 th @ 10:00 a.m.

The
Circle

For more information, suggestions, or questions about any of the gatherings or organizing a gathering, contact Char Frese (315)221-1303 or Wendy Falzano (518)526-6149.



Breaking The Chains Biblical Recovery Ministry ~ Ken & Michelle Kavanagh

Fanning The Flames of Your Heart

13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

Periodically we all go through dry seasons spiritually. Sometimes we know it and sometimes we aren't aware of it until we are right in the middle of it. There are different reasons it can happen. Most of the time it's our fault for allowing other things to come before our time with God and sometimes the enemy can try to pull us off the vine by baiting us with distraction. Whatever the case, God will use it to draw us back to Him and to get us to where we need to be. I know this spiritual dryness well.

Not long ago I had been praying for God to fan the flames of my heart spiritually as I have been going through a dry season. I still pray and read the bible (though not reading as often as I used to), but something had been missing...quiet time. I sometimes think my quiet time button is broken because it can be hard for me to sit long without my mind wandering to things I have to do, my phone ringing, my cat wanting my attention, etc. Sometimes my times with God can be as short as 20-30 min. I do find those longer times but not as often as I used to. Yet God is patient with me and continues to provide answers to my questions, calms my concerned heart, and provides for our every need.

The same day that I had been praying about fanning the flames of my heart, God ministered something to me that night. A few weeks prior to this, I put together a sourdough starter for the first time. It seemed like a lot of work and a long process but I was willing to give it a try, hoping I wouldn't mess it up as you have to feed it twice a day with flour and water. Some days I can barely remember half the stuff I need to get done so this little starter may starve. Yet, every day I was diligent and fed my starter twice a day. Each day I'd look at my starter to see if it had bubbles which meant the little microorganisms were eating up the sugars in the flour and getting stronger and more active. I was excited to see the bubbles, looking forward to the time starter would be strong enough so I could use it to make sourdough bread. So, that night as I was tending to my starter and looking at the bubbles, part of a scripture came to my mind over and over, "*Seek me and you will find me....seek me and you will find me*". So I put everything away and went and sat with the Lord.

As I sat, the Lord ministered to me, "*Do you see the bubbles? How long did it take you feeding your starter before your starter became active?*" I thought about it "about a week". And then He replied "*less than a week*". When I thought about it again, that was true as it was only a few days. He continued, "*It only took a few days of feeding your starter twice a day for it to become active and now almost 2 weeks later it is strong enough to make bread with. Feed yourself my word twice a day for 2 weeks and watch what happens, once in the morning and once at night*". So that night I began feeding myself twice a day.

No one is beyond going through a dry season. It doesn't mean you don't love God, it simply means life got in the way and you've become distracted. God is faithful and will try to get your attention, even if it's with something as small as ministering to you through some flour and water. What's important is if you listen or not. In recovery, it's imperative to stay close to the Lord and spend time with God because distraction can lead you right back to square one. The more we feed our spirit with the Word of God, the stronger we become. In time, we become spiritually stronger and more able to endure temptations, negative words or actions from others, and we become more healed through God's Word. As with the sourdough starter, we become active and strong. Our outlook on life changes because we are applying God's Word and renewing our mind (Romans 12:2). It's the same with physical exercise. In the beginning of our time working out, we aren't immediately strong, but as we continue working out day by day, our bodies become stronger and in time we are able to handle more weight. It's the same spiritually.

Breaking The Chains continued...

Hebrews 4:12 states:

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

God's Word is able to heal and restore, and when we allow it to work deep inside of us, it will change our character and behavior. It lays us open, convicting us and then going to work on restoring us when we apply what the Word says. It is living and active.

Within those couple of weeks, I found I had an attitude adjustment and began looking at things differently. I felt better and spiritually stronger. It doesn't mean I still won't go through difficult times, but the difference is that I will be able to handle them better because I am walking through it with God and not try to bear the weight of it myself. Any negative thoughts can be taken down quickly. How do we do this? *"we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* (2 Corinthians 10:5)

If you've distanced yourself from God or have been distracted, repent and move closer. Start by feeding yourself twice a day on His Word. As time goes on, you will feel your heart and spirit become revived as the Word of God is both food and drink to the spirit and gives everlasting life:

John 4:13-14

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

John 6:51

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."





Emergency Preparedness
Are You Ready?

TYPES OF DISASTERS - Part I

Disasters can strike at any moment. The more prepared you are and the more aware you are, the more of a chance you have for survival. Below you will find different types of disasters you may encounter, what to look for and how to help you and your family be safe during them.

Tornadoes – Tornadoes are produced from powerful thunderstorms, cause fatalities and can devastate a neighborhood in seconds. Tornadoes are rotating, funnel shaped clouds that their winds can reach up to 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Danger signs are a change in sky color (brownish, green, or yellow cloud colors); large hail, a large, dark low lying cloud (particularly if rotating), loud roar similar to a freight train or a strange quiet occurring within or shortly after a thunderstorm.

- Tornado Watch - Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.
- Tornado Warning - A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately. Most injuries occur from flying debris so protect your head.

If you are in:

- A structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building) then go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. You can also cover yourself with a blanket, protecting yourself from flying debris
- In a high-rise building - go to a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible. Put on sturdy shoes and do not open windows.
- A trailer or mobile home - Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.
- The outside with no shelter:
 - Immediately get into a vehicle, buckle your seat belt and try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter.
 - If your vehicle is hit by flying debris while you are driving, pull over and park.
 - Stay in the car with the seat belt on. Put your head down below the windows; cover your head with your hands and a blanket, coat or other cushion if possible.
 - If you can safely get noticeably lower than the level of the roadway, leave your car and lie in that area, covering your head with your hands
 - Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
 - Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.
 - Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

Pastor Sarah Flack Ordination

Last month we were pleased to celebrate the ordaining of Pastor Sarah Flack. May God bless her every endeavor as she continues to move forward in the service of the Lord.



Church News



From Pastor Sarah:

A very heartfelt thank you to all who helped make my ordination service such a special night. I am so glad to be able to serve here at the River Community Church. Thank you for your love and support.

Yours because of Him,
Pastor Sarah

We would like to thank everyone for approving the expense for the copier. It works so much more efficiently and prints a much better quality.



We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Kory Robbins and his crew for their generosity in painting all the trim and doors on the church and carport. They did a great job!



Grant Approval

RCC was approved for a grant from the Palmer Grant for American Baptist Churches. Some of the funds from this grant was used to purchase an AED (automated external defibrillator,) and a new refrigerator for the kitchen since the previous one stopped working. We are grateful for these new items!



Upcoming Events

Put these dates on your calendar!

11/26 (Sunday) - Pot Luck luncheon following church. Bring a dish to share.

11/27 (Monday) - Our Annual Church Decorating Party. Bring the family and join us to decorate the church and have dinner. (Pizza and snacks)

Reminder: There will be no Community Dinner in the months of November and December. We will pick up again on Monday, January 15, 2024.

Let it SNOW!

To our southern friends...we had snow on our roof on November 1st!

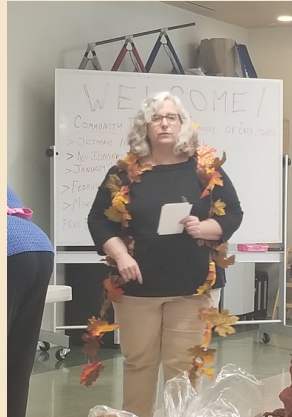
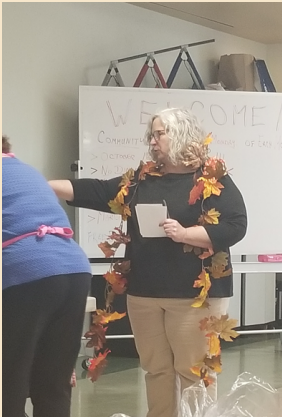


11/05	Terry Falzano
11/08	Gary Hampson
11/23	Charlotte Frese
11/30	Noah Lowe



Fall Spirit

Someone is getting into the Fall spirit!



Blessing Board

"Free kitchen table with 6 chairs which were given to us several years ago. Table and chairs are in very good condition. Table has minor small knicks on the legs. Chair material is in decent condition but has stains due to age (has been cleaned multiple times). The seat on one chair is broken but everything else regarding the chair is very good."

Kitchen table - used table 40x60 inches,
1 extension makes it 40x78 inches



October Community Dinner

The October Community Dinner of Turkey and all the trimmings turned out to be a big hit! We actually ran out of some of the food and had to turn only a few people away (next year we plan bigger!). We served 135 dinners total and may have missed a few.

A big thank you goes not only to the staff, but to all of the volunteers that showed up. God knows our needs because though we had a couple people unable to help due to illness, others showed up to help! No job is too small when serving others. Every hand was needed to make this work smoothly. Thank you for your help!

