

RIVER NEWS

September 2021



From The Pastor's Pen

~ Pastor Sarah Flack

Dear River Community Church Family and Friends,

Certain times of the year naturally lend themselves to new beginnings. Some of us start each year off with “New Year’s resolutions” while others see the changing of the seasons as a time to make a fresh start (Spring cleaning, anyone?). The beginning of the school year is also a time that many people try to develop new habits. But why are we so drawn to making things different and better?

Part of the answer is, of course, the culture we live in. We are used to seeing new and upgraded models of phones and cars each year; even our favorite foods change from time to time with new and improved versions. From a spiritual standpoint we seek out change because we know that the world as it is today has been subject to the consequences of sin, just as our individual lives have as well. We see the things in our lives and in the world around us that are not as they should be--the injustices, the hurts, the sin--and we yearn for things to be different. The good news is that God has already spoken about this.

In Revelation 21:1 we read the vision given to John:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea existed no longer.

One day all will be made new, and the things that we know are wrong in this world because of sin will be no more. We also have the words of Ephesians 4:22-24 that remind us of the truth that in Jesus:

you took off your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires; you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; you put on the new man, the one created according to God’s likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

In our individual lives, we are being renewed; as we walk with God and study His word, what we value and want in life is increasingly focused on God and His will. We become new creations in Christ. And, we don’t even have to wait for a special time of the year to seek God: each breath we are given is a chance to return to Him and to live a different life:

Because of the LORD’S faithful love we do not perish, for His mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness! (Lamentations 3:22-23)

May you live in a renewed relationship with God this month, River Church!

P.S.: As you pray this month, don’t forget to pray for students, teachers, bus drivers, administrators, parents, and all the many people who are involved with schools. You can think about specific people and schools as you pray, and consider making your prayers for them a regular occurrence throughout the school year.



Elder Ministry

~ Dean Wilkie

Hello brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Here we are standing in the doorway of September, our summer has slipped away way too fast. As I've shared many times before, this is my favorite time of year; I like the fall best of all. The temperatures are so much more enjoyable, the quality of the air to breathe is so much more sustainable, and then there's that great color in the trees 'n Woodlands that comes to us in autumn. I've always enjoyed the harvest time of year. I've always felt such a security from having the fruits of your labor from the garden canned or stored in the root cellar or canning pantries, yes I could just go on and on! One of the other things that I've always appreciated of this time of year is; after having unrestricted liberties, no time schedules, and few commitments; we come back into a time of scheduling and commitments that require us to discipline ourselves and structure our days or weeks.

It's no secret that this coincides with years of being programmed around school year schedules. Regardless of what requires us to restructuring our lives and having some order to our days, this too is one of those things I've appreciated after having the summer off.

This makes it an appropriate time to pick up your Bible, blow the summer dust off it and start a disciplined reading of God's word, spend time meditating on the Scriptures, look up word meanings that may perplex you, reading through some for greater concept, or look up cross reference verses that reflect back, to get a greater context. Scripture proves scripture and will never contradict itself, if we feel it is contradicting itself, we need to find the deeper context for better understanding. It's also a good time to plug into a Bible study that may be going on within the church body. Some of them may be held in private homes, some of them may be held within the church, but it's a great time to fellowship with fellow believers, bouncing your thoughts and understanding with other's interpretations, or just having a good time gathering together with fellow believers. We often share joys and concerns (and even recipes) making for a richer time of fellowship overall.

So I would extend a warm invitation to come join us in a study, plug into a group in and grow as we go! I will close with scripture from Ecclesiastes 3:1,11 "To everything there is a season and a time for every matter or purpose under heaven. [11]God has made everything beautiful in its time He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet that no one can fathom the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end".

Blessings in Christ Jesus, who with the Father pour out blessings beyond measure

In His service,

Elder Dean



Grief Ministry

~ Laura Schafer

Gratitude in Grief

“Count it ALL joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” James 1:2-4

If you have time, read all of James, it is a wonderful resource for us as we try to live in Christ through suffering and grief.

Psalm 107 tells us to give thanks because the Lord is good. We are told in Thessalonians that rejoicing, praying and giving thanks is the will of God for us. Colossians tells us the testing of our faith produces steadfastness which in turn helps us become perfect (mature) and complete, lacking nothing.

We are not told to rejoice or be happy because of our loss, but we are to rejoice because God loves us! He has redeemed us! He is doing a transforming work in us even as we grieve. Rejoicing in God for all he has done for us in Christ is also a great way to stop the negative thoughts. When we give thanks to the Lord, when we dwell in Him and He in us, we are not dwelling on our loss. When we have an attitude of gratitude instead of dwelling on our loss, we begin to find joy and peace again.

We have to work to change our thoughts, it isn't always easy. We must practice being thankful for it to become part of our daily lives.

A gratitude list can help us change what we think about. When we change our thoughts and set our minds on the things of God we have something to think about besides death, grief, and sorrow. As we study and apply the Word of God in our lives we not only begin to heal, we also begin to do the next right thing. We begin to care and serve others.

Can you think of things you're grateful for? Why not start your own Gratitude List. Try writing three things you are grateful for from the life and death of your loved one you lost. Be sure to also add something you are grateful for since your loss. Practicing gratitude will help you find healing, hope and peace, and even joy during our grief. There is always, always, something to be thankful for. Some days we have to look a little harder, but if we look to God and for God in all things, we will find Him!



Breaking The Chains Biblical Recovery Ministry
~ Ken and Michelle Kavanagh

God Bless you all! We were asked to take a moment and share a bit about ourselves which we are happy to do.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

(Philippians 4:13)

Philippians 4:13 has been our main scripture for Breaking The Chains since it began in 2008. For us, it's a reminder of where we received our strength to get through some of our toughest times. There isn't anything we can't do when Christ strengthens us!

Ken and I were high school sweethearts and after high school, Ken enlisted into the Army and a year later we were married. The military lifestyle would be our way of life for the next 21 years. As a military family, we learned both structure and flexibility. Anyone who is familiar with the military lifestyle understands the term "hurry up and wait". This is where one learns patience. In this lifestyle, we learned to value friendship because those friends became our family when we were far from home and we are still friends with many of them today. We were blessed to be able to travel and see things that many have not seen, spending a total of seven years in Germany, and the rest of our time spent in Kansas, Texas, Georgia, back to Kansas and finally Fort Drum. During that time, I spent ten years working and volunteering for the American Red Cross in military casework/emergency services and disaster services.

Looking back over those years, we can see how the Lord used our work experience and military life to prepare us for our work in recovery. Many of those later years were also spent healing us of many things and refining us and He continues to heal and refine us today. We've had our high seasons and low seasons but without Christ, we would never have made it through some of those low seasons. It was our faith in Him that saw us through those tumultuous seasons. Although we went to church, we didn't have as close of a relationship with Christ back then as we do now. Still, God was with us. He was with us during my complicated pregnancy. He was with us when our daughter, Sarah, had spinal meningitis at 6 months old while we were living in another country. He was with us during Ken's deployments. He was with us every step of the way and continues to be with us today. Back in the late 90's I began to pray for God to use Ken and I for His service. It didn't happen right away, but God heard my prayers and in 2005, I became a leader in Celebrate Recovery in Junction City, KS and Ken drove the van to bring people to the program. Then when we moved back home, we both became the directors of Celebrate Recovery in Watertown for almost a year and a half. In 2008, we started Breaking The Chains and currently hold meetings at River Church on Tuesday nights and at the Father's House Prayer Chapel in Black River on Thursday nights. Since 2016, we have corresponded with close to 85 inmates from all over the U.S. and send them our lessons.

God has blessed us with one daughter, Sarah, who is a dog trainer and is on the worship team at her church. He has also blessed us with a wonderful son-in-law, Jeremiah, who is in his last semester of Mortuary School in Troy NY. We are proud of them both!

We are grateful to God for utilizing us to help others. We are also grateful to be able to provide our services to the wonderful people at RCC and the Clayton Community. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!



Women's Ministry
~ Wendy Falzano



I can hardly believe September is here and the summer is almost over.

At our August gathering we voted on how to disburse the monies received at the rummage sale. The following is what was decided:

- 10% will be given as a tithe to RCC
- \$100 will be given to Mars Hill Network
- \$100 will be given to K-Love Radio
- \$200 will be given as scholarships for Reverb
- \$200 will be given to help a family with funeral expenses
- \$50 of hygiene products will be donated to each Credo & local food pantries.
- \$125 will be given to Samaritans Purse for Haiti Relief

Future Projects

- \$500 Scholarship fund
- School supplies for local schools
- other ideas in the works

After the “business” portion of the meeting, we had a Biblical scavenger hunt. Great finds, great fun and all went home with a token prize!

This month’s gathering is scheduled for Saturday, September 18th from 10 am – 12 pm

We are planning to pack up some take home hygiene packages to donate to the Credo program for women and/or CareNet. We were also thinking of holding a “sprinkle” for the fellowship kitchen. We hope to provide more information in the church bulletin of 9/12/21.

Come join us for some nurturing fellowship as we gather to meet the needs of others. Remember, you are always welcome to bring a friend.

For our October gathering we will be making apple pies again hosted by our very special in-house baker, Char Frese. Mark your calendars for October 16th, 2021. We will put the list of items that you will need to bring on the bulletin board, so keep your eye out.

I will also be putting up some different gathering events for women offered by ABW and some local women’s ministries. A great opportunity to meet with other Christian women in the community.

Upcoming Fall Bible Studies

Check out our upcoming Fall Bible Studies. There are many great studies to choose from!

Fall Bible Studies

Job-When Pain is Great

Leader: Dean Wilkie - (315) 775-6700

Job asks big questions about pain, suffering, and God's sovereignty-and it shows us God is with us through everything.

When: Wednesdays @ 6:30 starting 9/22. Book order deadline 9/12

Where: River Community Church

Heaven, Hell and Life After Death

Leader: Laura Schafer - (315) 775-6711

In this eye opening study, you'll examine the Bible's answers about death & what comes next.

When: Tuesdays @ 12:30 starting 9/21. Book order deadline 9/12

Where: River Community Church

The Saint's Everlasting Rest

Leader: Terence Falzano - (518) 577-4679

A life changing study on the infallibility of Holy Scripture. An irrefutable discourse based on God's Promises and on reason yielding FULL assurance of Salvation, the Holy Spirit's comforting joy, redemption and eternal life in heaven through the Fruit Christ's blood.

When/where: Tuesdays @ 7-8 - 3052 Huff Road, Cape Vincent

Men's Study on Pride

Leader: Sunny Mitchell - (315) 408-3763

The root of sin, pride & how it can harm our relationship with the Creator if we let it.

When/where: Thursdays @ & 7 - 176 North Shore Drive, Clayton

Fierce Women: The Power of a Soft Warrior

Leader: Wendy Falzano - (518) 526-6149 and Angela Taylor - (315) 766-6542

A study to encourage women to discover, embrace and delight in God's divine design and mission for their lives.

When/Where: TBA

Hebrews 6:1-2

Leader: Wanda Collins - (315) 222-5618

When: Sundays mornings 8:15-9 AM 9/26-10/31 or Thursdays 7-8 PM via Zoom 9/30-11/4

Who brews? He-brews! So let's "brew" a solid foundation by studying Hebrews 6:1-2 together.

Where: River Community Church

When Faith Fails: Finding God in the Shadow of Doubt -Book Club

Leader: Pastor Sarah Flack - (315) 408-6482

Join us on the last Sunday evening of each month for a lively discussion of the book *When Faith Fails: Finding God in the Shadow of Doubt*. Whether you have been a Christian for awhile, are a new believer, or know someone who is struggling with their faith, this is a great chance to ask questions and see what Scripture says. Books available on Amazon or your favorite online books store.

When: Last Sunday of each month @ 6.30

Where: River Community Church

To reserve your spot or for more details, call or text the study leader.

More studies to come...watch your bulletin for details

Are you interested in leading a study? Contact the church office.

Adult Daycare RESPITE Programs



Jefferson County Office for the Aging

Announcing 2 new social Adult Day Care RESPITE Programs starting fall 2021.

Caregiver Support and Respite Care is available to family members and friends who are responsible for providing assistance and care to older adults over 60 years of age residing in Jefferson County. Currently eligible seniors can get in-home care for respite but there is a waiting list for caregivers due to a shortage of workers. There are NO social adult day care programs in Jefferson County until now.

We will open two locations – one at River Community Church in Clayton and one in Watertown which will offer 4 hours per day, two times a week of socialization, structured activities such as cooking, crafts, beginner Tai Chi and games for seniors that are functionally or physically challenged. This will provide the caregivers which the much needed time to go to work, handle personal business or just relax.

Jefferson County OFA is looking for community and student volunteers that will assist with these programs. All volunteers will receive REST (Respite Education Support Tools) training, as well as Alzheimer's Caregiving Education.

Thank You River Community for partnering with us in caring for our elderly. If you are interested in participating as a **client** or **volunteer** please call the OFA office at **315-785-3191**.

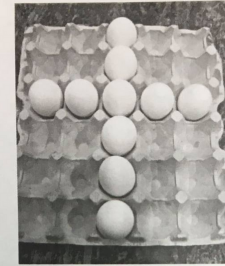
RCC Flower Beds

We'd like to thank everyone for your hard work in maintaining the flower beds. They looked beautiful!

Please remember to prepare them for fall and to remove all of the decorations before the first snow.



Men's Ministry Breakfast



Men's Breakfast

Saturday, September 11th

At 9 am

PLEASE RSVP

To RSVP or for more information

Text or leave a message with

JD Flack @ (315)405-0330



- 09/07 Bethany Collins
- 09/08 Jacoby Schermerhorn
- 09/12 Jacob Burns
- 09/19 Dean Wilkie
- 09/23 Harold Chapman
- 09/23 JD Flack
- 09/26 Kimberly Collins
- 09/28 Sarah Flack