

## **Riverlawn Presbyterian Church**

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# **JANUARY 2023**

Happy New Year, everyone! As is so often the case, this is that time when we look back on the past year – recalling the highlights and the hardships, the successes and the shortcomings. And we look to the coming year as an opportunity to “do better” – to succeed where we have previously faltered. Which got me thinking ... How would you define success?

What? You would like my opinion. Well, okay. I would say success, first and foremost, is doing what God has asked us to do, doing it His way, and in His timing. Wrestling with the issue, I imagined what it might be like to come before God’s throne at the end of my earthly life and say, “God, here is what I have done for you.” Fearing that the response might be: “Chris, I love you, but that was not what I gave you to do.”

Think with me for a moment about some of God’s faithful and, hence, most successful leaders. We are on the heels of Epiphany, when we remember the Magi who traveled far to worship at the feet of the Christ child. And then, in just a week’s time in the Church year, we jump all the way forward to an adult Jesus being baptized by John, the initiation of Jesus’ mission to seek and save the lost. Jesus said of John the Baptizer, “Among those born of women none is greater than John” (Luke 7:28). Yet, if we were to create a bar chart on the size of John’s ministry over time, it would demonstrate a peak, followed by an abrupt decline.

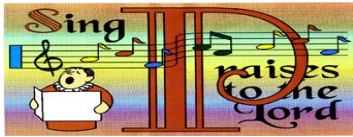
Considering others, the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah both served God with passion and obedience, but they were mostly written off by an unresponsive remnant (later killed); definitely not what most would consider success. Jesus didn’t wring his hands and question his preaching strategy when “many of his disciples turned away and deserted him” (John 6:66). He remained content, knowing he was in the Father’s will. He had a larger perspective of what God was doing. It’s hard to see how any of the names on this list would be considered successful in most circles today. And yet the Bible makes it clear that God approved of their work.

Embracing God’s definition of success for you, for me, for Riverlawn, means that we must have one objective: to become what God has called us to become, and to do what God has called us to do—regardless of where any of that might lead us. It means that all other markers – increased attendance, better programs, a larger budget – have to take a backseat to this one.

I encourage you to pause and reflect for a moment. What might change in your context if you were to define success not by the numbers but as radically doing God’s will? What external markers might become less important? What internal markers might become more important? What fears or anxieties are you aware of as you even consider such questions? I understand how disorienting these questions might be. But I also know how rewarding and freeing it is to live from the center of God’s definition of success. If you are willing to take some risks and live with the tensions, in the coming year and beyond, I truly believe you won’t regret it.

As the Lord leads us on, may we become what He desires,

Pastor Chris



## MUSIC DEPARTMENT NEWS JANUARY 2023

As 2022 comes to a close it certainly is nice to look back on the year and be able to say thanks to the choir and all those who have been a part of our music program. How wonderful that we are finally back to normal events and activities. We've had the choir rehearsing regularly, singing anthems most Sundays and we've been able to have special music programs throughout the year. During December the choir shared anthems, there were vocal solos from Bill Bryan and Brenda Petry as well as our guest flautist, Aaron Sowards, on December 11. Also, thanks to Parry Johnson & Katiebeth Bowens for the addition of some percussion instruments on our anthems on December 11th. Looking forward to another year of being a part of the music program here as I begin my 40<sup>th</sup> year at Riverlawn as the choir director/organist. {January choir rehearsals -- 12th/ 19th/ 26th}.

Many times as the new year begins folks set goals and make resolutions. There's certainly nothing wrong with that but I'd like to suggest we also make 2023 a year when we strive to live wisely and one of the ways we can do that is by taking direction and guidance from the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is valuable to us because it gives us practical wisdom for everyday life. Here's just a few verses you may want to think about as the new year begins:

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3: 5-6 (KJV)*

*Keep vigilant watch over your heart; that's where life starts. Don't talk out of both sides of your mouth; avoid careless banter, white lies and gossip. Keep your eyes straight ahead; ignore all sideshow distractions. Watch your step and the road will stretch out smooth before you. Look neither right nor left; leave evil in the dust. Proverbs 4: 23-27 (The Message)*

*Commit to the Lord whatever you do and He will establish your plans. Proverbs 16:3 (NIV)*

*Those who conceal their sins do not prosper but those who confess and renounce them find mercy. Proverbs 28: 13 (NIV)*

Music Depart News Contd.

And lastly....for those who have ever called me or tried to have a conversation with me before 9:00am: *If you wake your friend in the early morning by shouting 'Rise and shine!' it will sound to them more like a curse than a blessing.* 😬 Proverbs 27:14 (The Message)

More Proverbs coming next month.

Happy New Year!  
Pam

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### FAMILY NIGHT

Family Night will not meet Wednesday, **January 4th**, but resume **Wednesday, January 11**, starting with dinner prepared by Jim Recknagel at 5:30. Following dinner, there will be worship, music and activities for the children and youth, CORE discipleship group, and time for fellowship for the adults. **Volunteers are needed for set-up and clean-up before and after dinner. Please let the church office know if you can help.**



*Pam will be presenting 'Good Shepherd' selections on **Wednesday evening, January 18**, following dinner. The program will feature songs that were inspired by Psalm 23, as well as pieces that reflect characteristics of Jesus as our shepherd. Join us in the sanctuary at 6:40.*

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### Un-hanging of the Greens

The "Un-hanging of the Greens" will take place on Saturday, January 7 at 10:00 a.m. Please come out and help if you can. The more help, the easier for all.

**Dates to Remember**

- 01/01 No Communion (moved to January 8)
- 01/04 No Family Night
- 01/06 Epiphany
- 01/07 Bitty Basketball
- 01/08 Communion celebrated
- 01/08 Ordination & Installation of Officers during 10:30 service
- 01/11 Family Night
- 01/14 Bitty Basketball
- 01/15 Session meeting at 2:00pm
- 01/16 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration at 7:00pm (location TBA)
- 01/18 Family Night
- 01/21 Bitty Basketball
- 01/22 Youth Outing: Winter Jam concert
- 01/25 Family Night
- 01/28 Bitty Basketball
- 02/05 Communion celebrated (Sherry Marcum and Rick Wolford will be celebrants)
- 02/05 Deacons meeting following worship
- 02/22 Ash Wednesday service 6:30pm

*Epiphany of the Lord  
Friday, January 6*

Celebrating the manifestation of God as the baby Jesus and revealing Himself to the world.

**BITTY BASKETBALL**



Bitty Basketball season will begin Saturday, January 7 and end February 25. Awards Luncheon will be held on Sunday, February 26. You can contact the church office for additional information (304-727-8872).



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

- |                   |                      |  |
|-------------------|----------------------|--|
| 7 Terri Adkins    | 21 Brenda Petry      |  |
| Paul Vaughn       | 22 Betty McAdam      |  |
| 8 Ron Claar       | 23 Donald Marcum Jr. |  |
| Layna Kilbert     | 28 Donald Marcum Sr. |  |
| 13 Laura Cottrill | 29 Lucy Suchy        |  |
| 15 Joanna Keller  | 30 Ryan Campbell     |  |
| 19 Jake Shears    | 31 Charlie Smith     |  |
| 20 Gayle Michael  |                      |  |
| Ava Warner        |                      |  |



- |    |                |
|----|----------------|
| 1  | Susan Bryan    |
| 8  | Kathy Barnes   |
| 15 | Beckie Croghan |
| 22 | Susan Bryan    |
| 29 | Susan Bryan    |
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**CHOIR REHEARSALS**

January 5—no rehearsal  
January 12, 19, 26—7:00 pm

**BUILDING SECURITY**

After church lock-up for January is Jason Barnes.  
After hours security check for January:

- 01— Pat Croghan
- 08— Brenda Petry/Rosie Rhodes
- 15— Bill Bryan
- 22— Pat Croghan
- 29— Ron Claar



**2023 Riverlawn Elders and Board of Deacons**

**Elders:**

*Kathy Barnes*  
304-444-3058; Kabgmrl@comcast.net

*Joe Lothes*  
304-767-8313; fishlothes@hotmail.com

*Pam Mullins*  
304-932-8463; pwwmandpsm@yahoo.com

*Paul Mullins*  
304-741-5914; nascarmemberswva@yahoo.com

*Sharon Herndon*  
304-444-2032; Polecat818@hotmail.com

*Jamie Albert*  
681-340-1128; James.macd.albert@gmail.com

**Session will meet January 15 at 2:00pm via Zoom.**

**Deacons:**

*Jason Barnes*—304-205-3315  
jasonbarnes@yahoo.com

*Ann Cox*—304-389-2227  
Lcox235@aol.com

*Mary Reppert*—304-419-2755  
Reppert.mary@gmail.com

*Mimi Albert*—304-546-6547  
Mimialbert72@yahoo.com

**Deacons will not meet in January. Next Deacons' meeting is February 5, following the worship service.**

**Ordination and installation of new Elders and Deacons is at the service on January 8.**

*Riverlawn Strives To*

*Purge ourselves of pride by focusing on glorifying God  
Teach the truth through fellowship & discipleship  
Demonstrate a life of love through service to others  
Share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those in need  
**Purge Pride, Teach Truth, Live Love***

Join us for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration on Monday, January 16 at 6:00 pm at St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church on B Street in St. Albans.



Dodrill/Drennan family (Randy and Caroline Dodrill); Donald Miller (Frances Miller); Brody Sneed (Missy Sneed); The family of June Paxton; Emma (Linda Monday); Eleanor Reeves (Laura Cottrill); Michelle Flint (Casey Stribling); Katie Price (Joanna Kellar); Linda Means; Betty McAdam; Nancy Young; Kayla and Brandon (Kathy Barnes); Randy Dodrill and family; Lauren (Ron & Sherry Claar's granddaughter); Beverly Day (Wanda Smith); John and Nan Bedick; Paul Vaughn; David, Laura and Max Brubaker (Janet Brubaker); Joanna Kellar; Sherri Drake (Ann Cox); Dave and Joyce Ryan; Jason Barnes' friend and friend's mother; Hannah Bowman; Roger McBride (Linda Wilson); Jane Lothes; JB Recknagel; Casey Stribling; Lakyn Kilbert; David Blevins (Donald & Sherry Marcum); Janet Young; Charlie Kellam; Mick Hughes (Caroline Dodrill); and for the Global Church that we may embody the gospel to all.



**FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER**

Deadline for submitting information for the February Newsletter is Wednesday, January 25.