



**Riverlawn Presbyterian Church**  
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## **JANUARY 2024**

As we enter a new year, it's that time when folks tend to set goals, make commitments, and embrace challenges (I'm trying to avoid using that "R" word that only seems to pop up this time of year). It is a season marked by *ambition* ... sometimes, it may appear to be overly ambitious. But is that necessarily a bad thing?

Ambition is one of those words that is often preceded by a negative adjective. We may talk about "bad ambition" like the greed of a CEO or a celebrity starving for greater fame. We may also speak of "blind ambition," like when someone sees the goal but not the people around her. For some, the characteristic has become a dirty word—synonymous with being dog-eat-dog, ladder-climbing, or self-promoting. But it doesn't have to be disastrous or destructive.

*Never satisfied, but always content* is the posture of a properly ambitious person. No one enjoys being around someone who thinks he deserves more credit than he really does. Stay hungry and motivated, not arrogant and entitled. I think of ambition as I do technology – morally neutral but susceptible to manipulation. Gang leaders have ambition, sure. But so did Mother Teresa. Ambition isn't inherently evil, but we must learn to channel it.

Some people are born with an extra helping of it, and they run the risk of developing a self-serving default setting. Others have to really work to nurture ambition in their lives and fight the temptation to become too comfortable wherever they find themselves. No matter which end of the spectrum you find yourself on, the characteristic is buried deep within you. Once it is unearthed, you must bridle it to keep it in healthy balance.

As a twin, comparison and competition came naturally to me. Brian and I always strived to outdo each other. We always felt the pull to challenge ourselves ... and each other. Whether it was the Cub Scout Pinewood Derby or the elementary school spelling bee or the high school Physics Olympics, we wanted to win first place. (It should be obvious by now, yes, we were nerds ... okay, still are. But just so you know, I prefer the term geek).

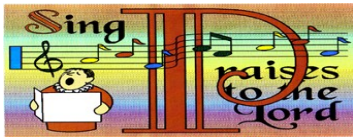
But as both Brian and I can attest, we are not the math and science wizzes we used to be. I quickly realized my has-been status! But a habit of ambition is much more than this. In its purest form, ambition is a knowledge of and appetite for what's next. When your ambition is properly fed, it will yield a desire to achieve, to grow, and to do one's best.

The Scriptures warn us again and again to flee selfish ambition. So what should we pursue instead? To whom can we look as a model on how to live with the kind of ambition that honors God and benefits those around us? We must remember that between the time Jesus lay in that manger and hung from that cross, he lived the life we have been called to imitate.

As we read the Gospels, we encounter a Jesus full of grace, love, wisdom and power ... reaching out to the sick, the lame, the outcast, the child, the foreigner, the sinner ... providing hope & healing, truth & revelation, forgiveness & salvation. Think about all that ... His life and ministry, ushering in the Kingdom of His Father, setting his gaze to the agony and humiliation of the cross ... that took great ambition – the right kind of ambition. *Ambition driven by humility and love*. And He has called His disciples to carry on this work ... that includes you and me.

So, the question becomes ... what is driving your ambition ... or should I say *Whom*?

Compelled by the relentless love of Christ, Pastor Chris



**MUSIC DEPARTMENT NEWS**  
**January 2024**

The Christmas season has come and gone. I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and you were able to be a part of some of the services here at Riverlawn. I think most folks really like the Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service. Those of us in the choir loft get a special view of the sanctuary as we sing *Silent Night*. It is a beautiful sight as the candles are lifted upward and reminds us that the light has come into the world. Christ's arrival brings us hope, peace, joy and never-ending love. Let us carry that with us into the new year.

Choir will be continuing a break from rehearsals until January 11. We will meet that evening at 7:00.

Something to ponder as we begin 2024.....*Memories remind us that nothing lasts forever. Time is precious and should not be wasted. Enjoy life and remember don't count the days, make the days count.* (From "Lessons Learned in Life")

**Happy New Year!**  
**Pam**

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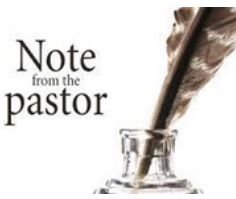
Bitty Basketball begins on Saturday, January 13. at 9:00 a.m. and will run until March 2nd, with the awards banquet on Sunday, March 3rd. Games are on the hour from 9:00am until 3 or 4pm Come and join the fun to cheer on the little ones and connect with their families and our community.

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**Un-hanging of the Greens**

The "Un-hanging of the Greens" will take place on Saturday, January 6 at 10:00 a.m. Please come out and help if you can. The more help, the easier for all. Thank you!



To my Riverlawn family:  
Once again, I was so touched by the warm reception given for my birthday. Thank you for the MANY ways that so many of you bless and encourage me, for your words, and generosity and service! Your constant, consistent, continuous and expansive gestures of love are something that I cherish, and for which I give thanks to God! Week after week, year after year ... Thank you and God bless every one of you! - Pastor Chris

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Join us on Wednesday nights for Family Night, a time to enjoy friendships and our church family, with dinner at 5:30. Activities for the children and youth begin at 6:15. **Family Night is on a break and will resume on January 17.**

The set-up schedule for January is:  
Kitchen Crew  
17<sup>th</sup> – Mimi Albert & Sherry Claar  
24<sup>th</sup> – Judy Clingenpeel & Sherry Claar  
31<sup>st</sup> – Pam Johnson

Table set-up—January—March:  
1st Wednesday—Pastor Chris  
2nd Wednesday—Pastor Chris  
3rd Wednesday—Jamie Albert  
4th Wednesday—Parry Johnson

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**The following bible study meets in the cottage:**

**On January 3** Romans Session 6 Part 1 and January 10 Romans Session 6 Part 2 at 6:15pm (after Family Night dinner). You do not need to come to the dinner to be a part of this study.

Epiphany of the Lord  
Friday, January 6

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



Monday, January 15

07 Susan Bryan  
14 Beckie Croghan  
21 Beckie Croghan  
28 Susan Bryan



**CHOIR REHEARSALS**

Choir rehearsals each Thursday at 7:00pm—**Rehearsals resume on January 11.**



**PRAYER CONCERNS**

Bill Bryan; Betty McAdam; Larry Lamanac (Joe and Jame Lothes); Buddy O'Dell; Sherry Ellis; Wanda Smith; the family of Darrell Brightwell (Bill Bryan); Elizabeth Thompson (Bill Bryan); Andre Felipe (Open Arms Foundation); Joyce Tompkins (Jamie and Mimi Albert); Alicia (Joe and Jane Lothes); Paula Meikle (Jamie Albert); Debbie Buntrock (Dawn Scheick's sister); Kathy Barnes; Laura Cottrill; Elbert Taylor; Aunt Edye and Danny Daetwyler (Jane Lothes); Trevor (Sherry Marcum); Missy Sneed; Trish (Joe Lothes' sister); Wanda (Linda Wilson's sister); Hannah Bowman; Linda Means; Beverly Day (Wanda Smith); Dave Ryan; the family of Roger McBride (Linda Wilson); JB Recknagel; Janet Young; Mick Hughes (Caroline Dodrill); and for the Global Church that we may embody the gospel to all.

**Prayer List for Churches**

**7th**—Church: Kangaita; Parish: Gaaki; Clifton Presbyterian Church, Maxwellton; Hughes River Presbyterian Church, Cairo.

**14th**—Church: Gachira; Parish: Gaaki; First Presbyterian Church, Huntington.

**21st**—Church: Kabiru; Parish: Gaaki; First Presbyterian Church, Mannington; Rock Forge Presbyterian Church, Morgantown.

**28th**— Parish: Gaaki; Parsons Presbyterian Church; Summerlee Presbyterian Church.

**BUILDING SECURITY**

After church lock-up for January is Mary Reppert

After hours security check for January:

07— Larry Hyatt  
14— Randy Dodrill  
21— Brenda Petry/Rosie Rhodes  
28— Butch and Sharon Herndon

If you are unable to cover the security check on your scheduled week, please let Pat Croghan know (304) 989-1894. Thank you.



7th—Terri Adkins  
8th—Ron Claar, Layna Kilbert  
13th—Laura Cottrill  
15th—Joanna Keller  
20th—Gayle Michael  
21st—Brenda Petry  
22nd—Betty McAdam,  
23rd—Donald Marcum, Jr.  
24th—Lora Beth Bowens  
28th Donald Marcum, Sr.  
29th—Lucy Suchy  
30th—Ryan Campbell, David Bowens  
31st Charlie Smith

**2023 Riverlawn Elders and Board of Deacons**

**Elders:**

*Kathy Barnes, Clerk of Session/Stewardship*  
304-444-3058; Kabgmrl@comcast.net

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

*Pam Mullins, Family & Community*  
304-932-8463; pwmandpsm@yahoo.com

*Paul Mullins, Building & Grounds/  
Worship/Fellowship*  
304-741-5914; nascarmemberswva@yahoo.com

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

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

**Session meeting January 14 at 2pm 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

**No Deacons meeting in January.**

***Ordination and installation of new Elders and Deacons during the 1030am service on January 7.***

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

- 1/03—Romans Bible Study resumes—6:15pm  
in the Cottage (each Wednesday thereafter)  
1/06—Epiphany  
1/06—Taking down of the Greens—9am  
1/07—Communion Sunday  
1/07—Installation of Elders and Deacons—10:30am  
1/13—Bitty Basketball season begins 9am-2pm  
1/14—Session meeting 2pm via Zoom  
1/15—MLK, Jr. Day  
1/17—Family Night resumes



The Food Pantry is in need of soup, even Ramen Noodle soup. Please begin collecting soup for SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY. Other than soup, here are our top needs:

Pancake Mix and Syrup  
Tuna  
Spaghetti sauce and noodles  
Corn Bread Mix  
Oatmeal  
Cereal



**Deadline for information for the February Newsletter is Friday, January 26.**

*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***