



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 17, 2020

IN THIS ISSUE:

- [A Note from Pastor Dave](#)
 - [Christmas Eve Candlelight Services](#)
 - [RVC I kids](#)
 - [RVC I Moms](#)
 - [RVC Men](#)
 - [Sappy Christmas Movie Night](#)
 - [Sermon Notes and Spacers](#)
 - [Giving Envelopes](#)
 - [This Week at RiverValley](#)
 - [Giving Update](#)
-

A NOTE FROM PASTOR DAVE

New Members coming in January

2020 has been an odd year in a lot of ways. We suspended our annual meeting and froze our budget till we could all safely meet. Those events have had a few

ramped up to a well-oiled, service-streaming church thanks to a lot of people. We have many who haven't been in the building for a number of months. We miss you all, by the way. God has blessed us, so we haven't had to make any cut backs.

One other consequence is that we now have two years of new members to affirm to our membership list. They have all been through the new members class and have been or are being interviewed by elders. They have signed the covenant with RVC and are waiting for acceptance. The elders are finishing their interviews and will introduce them in January.

As far as an annual meeting goes, we think that with the things happening right now in regards to the pandemic, that we may well be able to meet together normally early in the new year. So, for now, we will plan on our normal annual meeting in April. We, of course, can call for a special congregational meeting if needed.

Do angels sing?

Did you know that the Bible only has angels singing two times? Most of the time they are initially terrifying, followed by the admonition "Do not be afraid", followed by another announcement. It may surprise you to know that the Bible doesn't say they sang at the birth of Jesus.

Luke 2:13-14

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and **saying**, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

I checked it out. The Greek word "legontone" means "to say" or "to tell". They proclaimed, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!*"

There are two times that they **did** sing. The first is at the creation of the world. They sang as Christ Jesus formed the world. Maybe you remember when God had enough of Job and his friends, and he asked Job "Where were you when...?"

*understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone”. **Verse 7 “...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”***

So the angels (morning stars) sang at creation. The next time they sing is yet to come. It’s in Revelation, chapter five, when they finally find someone who is worthy to open the scroll of the end times. JESUS!

Rev 5:8-10

*And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. **And they sang a new song,** saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”*

What is the significance of this?

Some have posited that the angels, just like the earth, may be locked in such a fierce battle with evil that, from the creation and fall to the end of the age, they are not singing. Instead, they are working, fighting, and protecting. 1 Peter 1:12 says, “It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

Whatever else is true, you and I have reason to sing. Whether the angels are joining us or not, the grace given to those who trust in Jesus is worth singing about. If they aren’t singing yet, they will join us soon. In the meantime, I want them to hear me sing of the wonders of our God. I want them to hear the praises of our God on our lips. This Christmas maybe your celebration should include singing some Christmas carols with a loud voice for all the angels to hear as you glorify God in song.

What do I think?

Well, I don’t know whether the angels sing right now. I do know that when the redeemed sing, there is a divine action taking place. Our spirit sings out in

of unison, of unity, and connection to the Living God.

It makes sense that believers who have received God's salvation have something to sing about that angels don't. On the other hand, when I sing the name of Jesus, I can't help but think that the swell may include heavenly beings, as well.

[Back to top](#)

You are Invited...

What: Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

When: Thursday, December 24, 3:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

Where: RiverValley Church

Please note: There will be no child care for these services.



[Back to top](#)

RVC | kids

Expecting something means it has not yet happened. So, we wait.

I remember days long passed when I was expecting the birth of my first child. I was young but very much in love with being a wife and soon to be mom. With expectation, of course, there is waiting. This waiting period was not a passive “sit in a chair and ponder what it will be like”. It was more active, like going to doctors' visits, preparing the nursery, buying needed supplies, and busying myself with what had to be done for the baby's arrival. I lived as though I knew this baby was coming, and I prepared.

I wonder if we live as though we know Jesus is coming and we prepare? And

For me, I live as though the birth of Jesus mattered! It is the event that the Old Testament prophesied and the event angels announced and shepherds witnessed. This “God became incarnate moment” means He took on humanly form. Hebrews 2:17 says “He, almighty God, became flesh and dwelled among humanity”. Wow! Our God came down and showed us the way back to Him! And it began with His birth. Do you believe in His birth? Do you believe everything leading up to His birth?

I think another way I prepare is by trusting God in the trials and tribulations. There will be uncertainty in my life and uncertainty in the world. No matter the circumstances, we can rejoice in knowing we serve a mighty God. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ no matter what his circumstances were. He was singing from a jail cell and remained focused on his mission in 2 Timothy 1:12. Do you believe you can give glory to God in your situation, no matter what?

Finally, I think I prepare by being mission-minded, by going into the world and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and His return. I actively pursue others with love. I actively encourage others, and I actively engage others. Even in our persecution/opposition, we should be mission-minded. Do you believe, no matter your life circumstances, that you can share your hope in Jesus with others?

Our beliefs become our behaviors, and our behaviors become our habits. If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this will change your behavior. In turn, this behavior should develop habits of pursuing God. Habits that include everyday prayer, reading the Bible, and seeking Him in your daily life.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-1 states, *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*

If this were to happen now, are you ready? If you are not sure, feel free to reach out and ask questions.

Tracy Fettner, RVCI kids and family Director

[Back to top](#)

RVC | Moms

It started with a vision for moms to connect and, praise God, it became a reality! We are so blessed to launch RVC I Moms Facebook group. If you are a mom needing connection and encouragement, feel free to [join](#).

[Back to top](#)

RVC MEN

A new focus for RVC MEN in 2021

We will have no RVC Men meeting in January. Our first meeting will be on February 13, 2021. Something new is coming to RVC MEN. This is just a teaser. We hope you'll think about joining us on February 13th for our first RVC MEN of 2021. Our hope is that the crisis of the pandemic may be fading significantly by then, and we hope more of you will join us in person. We have a special goal that we will roll out that morning as we move RVC MEN to movement of _____. More to come later.

[Back to top](#)

An Invitation to Sappy Christmas Movie Night!

Bonnie and I love Christmas. We love celebrating the birth of our Savior every December, even though it was probably May when Christ was born. We also enjoy many of the family traditions, too. Bonnie loves decorating and cooking. I enjoy setting timers and eating. Bonnie loves using her gift of hospitality, and I love having people over. As you can imagine, we are suffering from some

We also realized that you all may have more time at home with just your family. We usually have what we have called “Sappy Christmas Movie Night”. Normally that would include food and friends invited over for a night of laughter and some Christmas movies that have little more to them than the rather formulaic Hallmark movies. You know, the ones with the returning single meeting a new flame, followed by a misunderstanding crisis, and a big kiss at the end. Oh, yeah, and a lot of perfectly decorated houses and towns. OK, I have watched too many of them.

With that said, I thought I’d share six of my favorites along with a few pointers. None of these are particularly Christian, although most have good themes of grace, wisdom, and change. Please note that these are not about the true meaning of Christmas. We are just sharing our “Sappy Christmas Movie Night” tradition with you, since we can’t invite you into our house just yet. So, get some popcorn, a blanket, and watch one of these with your family. Then send us an email on how you liked it. Here’s the scale:

- 1) **I can’t believe you recommended that. I want my hour and a half back.**
- 2) **That was sappy.**
- 3) **We had mixed reviews; some liked it and some fell asleep.**
- 4) **That was a lot of fun.**
- 5) **I’m all in. Sappy Movie Night was a success.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***The Ultimate Gift*** – Starring James Garner, this is a story about a spoiled family and a young man who gets gifts that help him mature. Warning, the little girl has cancer and does die. Might not be great for viewers under ten.
- ***A Season for Miracles*** - This is a “HALLMARK Hall of Famer”, which I think means it has a different plot than usual. Two children get taken in by their aunt who has to run to keep them together, and the rest you can see for yourself. No one dies. It is a romance with kissing at the end.
- ***Christmas in Canaan*** - This is a Billy Ray Cyrus movie. Yep, you heard right. It addresses racism in a way that brings two young boys together as best friends. Well worth watching with your kids.
- ***Return to Canaan*** - If you liked *Christmas in Canaan*, you might as well see the sequel.

themes in this one including a restored relationship with a dad and, of course, some kissing.

- ***An American Christmas Carol*** - Henry Winkler (from *Happy Days*) plays the part of Scrooge, and the scenes play out in Depression time. For those of you who have watched the traditional Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, and there are a lot, this may offer a little change of pace. Also, a note for those with little ones, the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future are not scary. They are just people.

[Back to top](#)

SERMON NOTES AND SPACERS

Sermon notes are available on Sunday mornings. You can pick them up before you enter the Worship Center. They are located in a basket under the missions map.

As a reminder, we also have Spacers available for you under the missions map. (Spacers are 8.5" x 11" pieces of paper that you can use to let people know you want one or two spaces between you.) So, if you'd like to use a Spacer, please pick one up before entering the Worship Center. You will see that we have more chairs in the rows in the middle section, because we have some large families that need more seats.

Note: If you don't use a Spacer, then you can't give the "Stink Eye" when the ushers put people in the row next to you. I am actually teasing a little. I have noticed that people assume they are getting the stink eye sometimes when they aren't, but with masks it's hard to tell. Remember, lots of grace.

[Back to top](#)

2021 GIVING ENVELOPES

Giving envelopes for 2021 are available for pickup in the Café. If you are new since last year and don't have giving envelopes but would like some, please let Kathi Miller know. Also, if you prefer to give online and no longer need

[Back to top](#)

THIS WEEK AT RIVERVALLEY

(Best viewed in landscape orientation on mobile devices)

Sunday, 12/20

Sunday Service (Worship Center)	9:00 a.m.
Sunday Service (Worship Center)	10:45 a.m.

Tuesday, 12/22

Elder Meeting (Library)	6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
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Wednesday, 12/23

Beth Moore Bible Study (Café)	9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
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Thursday, 12/24

Christmas Eve Service	3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Service	5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

[Back to top](#)

GIVING UPDATE:

YTD Giving 5/1/20 - 11/30/20

Actual: \$441,228.32

Budgeted: \$414,284.00

Weekly Giving: 12/7/20 - 12/13/20

\$13,719.73

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