

# THE MESSENGER

## Riverside United Methodist Church

*Where the Spirit runs deep...*

P. O. Box 128 · Park Rapids, MN · 56470

April 2018 · Vol. 18, Issue 3



### FROM THE PASTOR...

This year, Easter falls on April Fool's Day. Already, I've heard concerns that this will give people another good excuse to poke fun at Christianity. But, really, what happened at Easter was simply unbelievable! Because we know the full story and are familiar and comfortable with it, I think we lose sight of what an astonishing thing it was for the disciples to discover that Jesus was not in the tomb as they would have assumed—but he was alive and well and in their midst!

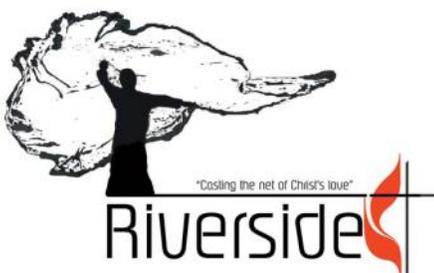
This is a very real part of what God accomplished in the resurrection. Just when we think we know how the story ends, God goes to work and makes something totally unbelievable happen!

I saw this many times in in my ministry at the nursing home. People who had experienced the most painful losses of home, independence, health, friends and community came to the nursing home expecting to count their days there until they died. For some people, that was exactly what happened. But other people discovered new life in a place where they least expected it!

One lady I met had a wonderful sense of humor—she was always laughing and telling jokes. But it wasn't always this way! For years, this woman had dealt with severe chronic pain that robbed her of her sense of humor and enjoyment of life. When she moved to the nursing home, her pain was finally addressed in effective ways. When she no longer had to deal with pain, her sense of humor was allowed to shine! This woman's best joke happened when April Fool's Day fell on a Sunday. A very well-dressed gentleman was walking through the worship area on his way to visit a resident. This woman called out to him, "Hey! You've got dog poo on your shoe!" Absolutely horrified, the man stopped, lifted first one shoe and then another to check! When she finally yelled, "Gotcha! April Fool's!", the whole room burst into laughter—including the gentleman who was fooled! *(Continued on page 2...)*

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*Casting the net of Christ's love to all through Faith, Action and Compassion.*

# Alleluia!

## HE IS ALIVE!

**“From the Pastor” continued from page 1...**

Christ’s resurrection was no April Fool’s joke! This is God’s mightiest act of love and grace for the people God so very dearly loves—you and me! And doesn’t that make all the difference in the world?

In Christ’s Love,

*Pastor Lori*

### Where We’re Going



Last September, several Riverside members attended the Renewal Institute at Hubbard UMC. This was a very inspiring experience, and those attending left feeling energized and excited. As attendees met later, the overwhelming conclusion was this: Riverside UMC is being called to do something big!

We reached this conclusion after thinking about the rich gifts for ministry God has given us. Not only do we have a beautiful church building and grounds, but we also have a congregation filled with people who love their Lord and are anxious and willing to serve.

But what might this next “big” thing be? If only the Holy Spirit would speak plainly and clearly, our way forward would be much more apparent; but this is not usually how God speaks to us.

So, we are entering a period of discernment (the quest for spiritual direction and understanding). We are starting, as we should, with prayer. Ministry leaders began this process late in March with prayer walks throughout the church building. We will continue this journey of prayer by asking you to join us in a very deliberate way of praying for your church, your pastors and ministry leaders, and how God might have us next serve the people of Park Rapids. We will have a Sunday worship sermon series and corresponding small group study, and discussion opportunities. All of this will officially start later this spring when the majority of our snowbirds are home from their winter away. While waiting for more information, you are invited to pray! Pray that God will show us who to serve, and lead us to this next big act of faithful service!

### Volunteer Recognition Sunday



On Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, we will be honoring our volunteers during the worship services. It is amazing when we stop to think about all the people who work to accomplish all the jobs that are involved in making a church run smoothly. We will take time to recognize all the different things people do to contribute to the overall ministry of Riverside! This is just the beginning as many of you offer your time, energy and talents in many places in our community!

# memorials & gifts

The Memorial Committee Mission Team of Riverside UMC currently has six members, and one of the pastors is a consulting member. The Memorial Committee meets two or three times annually, and as needed.

The primary responsibility of the committee is the supervision, recording and acknowledging of all gifts given in memory (and in some circumstances, in honor) to our congregation. Often the gifts received are designated by the giver for a specific purpose or use. Undesignated gifts are also received, and these gifts are held in the Memorial account until needed for a ministry of the congregation. The committee oversees the disbursements of these funds.

A record of gifts received is maintained and reported annually to the Church Conference. The wishes of family and friends giving gifts are honored. In addition, once a year on All Saints Day in early November, all members who have died during the previous year are remembered. Examples of items provided to the ministry of the congregation by these special funds include: the stained glass windows, baby grand piano, hymnals, flatware for the kitchen, church choir and bell choir funds, furniture and items for the nursery, playground equipment, audio equipment, lighting, trees, organ and furnishings.

Consider this important ministry when you are gifting a memorial in memory of a loved one or friend. Be sure to designate on the memo line on your check, "Memorial," specifying who you are honoring and a specific designation for the gift, if applicable.

Members of the committee will be happy to help you. Contact Marilyn Billings, Ann Carroll, Marilyn Rossman, Eunice Rothermel, Nancy Smith, or Jean Wilkins. Sharon Asp, office administrator, is also a contact person. Thank you for your support!

## **UMCOR Disaster Response Training**

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) will conduct an "Early Response Training" at Riverside UMC on April 14, 2018, from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Hosted by Riverside's Church and Society team, this training is for those who will be the first-called and first-on-site when a disaster strikes. The cost is \$20, and you may register at [www.minnesotaumc.org](http://www.minnesotaumc.org). Click on "News and Events/events calendar/April 14." Persons must be at least 18 years old and have a "Safe Gatherings" certificate, obtained through completion of safe sanctuaries training, offered as an online course which takes about 60-90 minutes and costs \$22. For more information contact Duane Gebhard or call the church office at 218-732-5205.

## **Help Wanted:**

- We are in need of a Nursery Attendant for Sunday mornings and special services. Talk to Mike Boettcher or Pastor Lori if interested. This is a paid position.
- Sound and PowerPoint technicians are needed for BOTH services (8:30AM & 10:30AM), and special services throughout the year. We will train you, and it is NOT difficult. Talk to Mike Boettcher or Pastor Chip if interested.



## JOIN THE FUN!

Riverside's Middle School and High School students are invited to be a part of fun and fellowship Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Dinner will be served in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 p.m., followed by Bible study, activities, fellowship and prayer. We have some great things planned this year, so join us, and bring your friends!

### APRIL SCHEDULE

April 4	High School Youth Group Meets
April 11	Middle School Youth Group Meets
April 18	High School Youth Group Meets
April 25	Middle School Youth Group Meets

### How to Be Involved:

Riverside has many fun opportunities throughout the year for children and youth to be involved! Along with Wednesday evening youth group, preschool through senior high students are invited to be part of Sunday School (September through April), and participate in worship services. Summer offers a week-long Vacation Bible School program for children kindergarten through 6th grade, and there are great camps available through the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, many at our local Northern Pines Camp! For more information, talk to Youth Director Kirsten Kisner, Pastor Chip Nielsen or Pastor Lori Nielsen. Camping brochures are available at the kiosk outside the office.

### Vacation Bible School - *Coming in June!*



If you've started planning summer activities, don't forget to include Vacation Bible School! Dates are June 11th thru 14th, and will be held at Northern Pines Camp in Park Rapids. The kids always have a great adventure under the pines. They'll grow in their relationship with God and each other, do cool crafts, learn new songs, and enjoy time with their friends! Calvary Lutheran Church will be part of the fun, so watch for sign-up information!

### Camp Registration is NOW OPEN!

The Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church offers many great camps each year to help children, adults, teenagers, and even grandparents grow in their faith through a great camp experience. Camp locations include Northern Pines (in Park Rapids), Koronis and Kowakan. The schedule of camping programs and registration information is available at [www.campminnesota.org](http://www.campminnesota.org), and camping brochures are located in the kiosk outside the office.



Camperships are available so that everyone can have a great camping experience. Information and applications can be found at [www.campminnesota.org/camperships](http://www.campminnesota.org/camperships).



## Become Part of UMW

All women are invited to become part of the United Methodist Women. Join a Circle (meet the third Wednesday of each month), focus group, or be part of activities of the United Methodist Women as a whole. Men are also invited to special study programs. Call the church office (732-5205) for more information.

**UMW Co-Presidents:** Vicki Manners & Carol Nelson

### Active Circle Groups:

Current Issue, Friendship Circle, Charity Circle

For more information on the United Methodist Women visit: [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org)

## April Schedule

- 9<sup>th</sup> UMW Executive Board Meets
- 18<sup>th</sup> Circles Meet - *Call to Prayer & Self Denial*

### Coming in May:

- 4-5 Spring Rummage Sale!
- 6 UMW Sunday
- 7 UMW Executive Board Meets
- 18 Invitational Potluck Luncheon

### Spring Rummage Sale!

May 4<sup>th</sup> - 8:30AM - 5:30PM

May 5<sup>th</sup> - 8:30AM - Noon

Begin bringing donated items to church Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.



## BOOK NEWS

By: Gail Gruis

*The Reason*, by Lacey Sturm

The day Lacey Sturm decided to kill herself was the day her old life ended. As an atheist who thought church was a place for hypocrites, she ended up in the back of a sanctuary after a screaming match with her grandmother. Despite hating everyone in the room, her experience is the reason she is alive today. With raw vulnerability, this hard rock princess tells her story of abuse, her depression and of her ultimate salvation. This book is rated as young adult, but it's also a good chance for adults to find out what young people are thinking. This book can be found with the UMW reading books in the Fellowship Hall.

## MEALS ON WHEELS THANK YOU

Members of Riverside UMC have participated in and been supportive of the Meals on Wheels program for many years. In response to our service, Lutheran Social Services Assistant Director Darlene Morgenstern-Loch writes, "I would sincerely like to thank you for your faithfulness in delivering meals to the frail, home-bound seniors in Park Rapids." "Without the help of the churches and you (wonderful volunteers), who give so unselfishly of their time and resources, meals on wheels would not get delivered and the quality of life for many seniors would be greatly diminished."

We at Riverside are also grateful to our many volunteer drivers and coordinators. Thank You!

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

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## Going Green!

We are starting a Green Team at Riverside! If you are interested in environmental care and helping us be better stewards of our resources, this is the team for you! Talk to Pastor Chip, Duane Gebhard or Jennifer Therkilsen if you are interested.



## Monthly Book Club and Bible Study Groups



**RIVERSIDE READERS** Our book group will be discussing “*Farm Girls*,” by Candace Simar and Angela Foster, on Monday, April 16th at 2:00 p.m. in Riverside’s Lounge. Books are available in the office. Check with Pastor Lori if you have questions or suggestions for future book club picks!

**THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY 8:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.** Study meets year-round in Room 5. New members always welcome.

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## TUESDAY MORNINGS - COFFEE AND GAMES IN THE LOUNGE

Tuesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to Noon, enjoy coffee in the Lounge. Meet a friend, check your Wi-Fi, read a magazine, or bring a favorite board game. Several tables play Scrabble, Cribbage or cards. Fresh bean-ground coffee!



## Blue Pew Pads are Back!

Recently we tried a new system of tracking attendance Sunday mornings with bulletin inserts. We appreciate your participation and patience in helping with this format, but we have decided to return to using the blue pads. **Please...** remember to register your attendance Sunday mornings! Sign the register in the blue folder, and kindly pass it to your neighbor. Thank you!

## Health & Wholeness

By: Judy Doyel, chair

Thank you to all who assisted in supporting an awareness of women’s health issues involving the symptoms of heart attack and stroke during the month of February. This is a program that should enlighten and educate a life-long continued awareness, and promote the teaching of others .

Thousands of years ago God gave us sound health principles for which we should live! With all the health issues we face today perhaps becoming more familiar with these teachings, we can enjoy a healthy lifestyle. A few of these Biblical instructions:

**Sanitation:** (Deut. 23:12-13); **moderation** (Prov. 23:20-21); **heart healthy choices** (Leviticus 7:23); **taking care of ourselves** (I Cor. 6:19-20); **the benefits of managing stress** (Psa. 119:165), (I John 4:18); and **finding happiness:** (Prov. (17:22). **“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.”** Proverbs. 4:23

## IN OUR PRAYERS

**Pray for those who are ill or recovering:** Don & Janis Eckhoff, Gannon Wilkins,  
Al and Viny VanRoekel

**Pray for those grieving:** *The family of Ellen Cochran.* Ellie passed away February 27<sup>th</sup>  
Service will be held Friday, July 20, 2018 at 11:00 AM.

*The family of Pat Donahue.* Pat passed away March 15, 2018. Service information  
is pending.

**Prayers for our church & its ministries including:** Missions in Laos; McCurdy School in New Mexico;  
Ministries at Red Bird Mission; Rev. Earl & June Harrison and the ministries in Jamaica; UMCOR.

**The Intercessory Prayer Team and Prayer Chains are available to help support you.**

**Call the church office (732-5205) for more information, or if you are in need of pastoral support.**



## 2018 Annual Conference Love Offering

Each year our Minnesota Annual Conference collects a Love Offering from the churches in our state that is divided among selected mission projects. This year, our Love Offering will be distributed among these three missions:

- 1. Puerto Rico Hurricane Recovery Trips:** This mission will receive 65% of the total Love Offering. Funds will mostly be used to purchase construction supplies from the island, but will also be used for supplies to fill cleaning buckets and hygiene kits. The rest of the funds will be used for scholarships for Short-term Volunteers in Mission participants.
- 2. Park Avenue United Methodist Church Children's Defense Freedom Schools Program:** This mission will receive 20% of the total Love Offering. The Freedom Schools program is a six-week summer day camp experience for children. Its mission is to ensure that every child receives "a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start, and a moral start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities." Each year, about 50 scholars are part of Park Avenue UMC's program, which aims to address the "summer slide" and to close the achievement gap. Mornings are spent improving reading skills. In the afternoons, children participate in enrichment activities including art, cooking, gardening, music/dance, and physical education. Love Offering funds will cover expenses for reading curriculum materials and for young adult mentors.
- 3. Numas Haus:** This mission will receive 15% of the total Love Offering. NUMAS Haus provides emergency shelter and support services to homeless single women and their children in New Ulm and surrounding Brown County. Adjacent and connected to First UMC in New Ulm, clients are able to live there for up to 90 days as they complete a program that includes counseling, health and financial management, parenting and food preparation skills, and obtaining access to county social services and vocational training. Upon completion, participants are encouraged to secure permanent housing, but may not immediately be able to pay market-rate rent. Love Offering funds will be used to help families with transitional rent assistance for six to 12 months.

## Enjoy *The Messenger* - your way!

Riverside's newsletter, *The Messenger*, is available in a format that fits your lifestyle. You may receive it on your e-mail, regular mail delivery or on our website at [www.riversideumcchurch.com](http://www.riversideumcchurch.com). **Articles must be submitted for publication by the 15th day of each month.** Space is limited, and we reserve the right to review for content and appropriateness.



### OFFICE HOURS

**Monday thru Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

**Building Open: 8:00 a.m.**

## April Schedule

- 1** Easter Sunday
- 2** Building Closed
- 14** Early Response Training
- 15** Volunteer Recognition Sunday

## CONTACT US:

### Riverside UMC

P. O. Box 128  
1005 Park Avenue N.  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
(218) 732-5205  
e-mail: [rumc@unitelc.com](mailto:rumc@unitelc.com)

### Visit us on the web at

[www.riversideumcchurch.com](http://www.riversideumcchurch.com)

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### Office Hours:

**Mon. -Thurs:** 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**Building Open:** 8:00 a.m.

### Sunday Worship

8:30 a.m. Traditional Service

9:30 a.m. Fellowship/Education

10:30 a.m. Contemporary Service

### Minnesota Annual Conference:

[www.minnesotaumc.org](http://www.minnesotaumc.org)

### United Methodist Websites:

[www.rethinkchurch.org](http://www.rethinkchurch.org)

[www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)

[www.unitedmethodistwomen.org](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org)

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