

From the Pastor—*A Christmas Carol* and Generosity

About this time last year, I decided to read through Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the classic story about the redemption of the unrelenting miser Ebenezer Scrooge. I had seen it on stage and, thanks to the Muppets, in other forms of high class production, but I had never read the original. It's a good read, a witty and poignant call to seasonal generosity rooted in generic and vaguely Christian assumptions.

This year, I came across the odd phenomenon of people on social media attempting to connect *A Christmas Carol* with contemporary tax legislation. In the cynical manner of social media, one Twitter user cited the novel as evidence that the rich have always needed to be frightened by the supernatural into sharing! This came in response to skepticism that **Congress's generous tax cuts for businesses and the upper ends of the tax bracket will end up providing any benefit to the less fortunate.**

Now, I know far too little of economics to have any sort of informed opinion about all of this, but I do know a bit about human nature. In this, the distillation of the message of *A Christmas Carol* from Twitter isn't far from the truth. **Fallen human nature is more likely to resemble Mr. Scrooge than Mr. Fezziwig. It is far too easy, at least in my case, for frugality and "wisdom" to turn into miserliness and an ungenerous spirit.**

What is lacking in *A Christmas Carol*, is a motive for generosity that goes beyond fear or warm fuzzies (i.e., "the Christmas spirit"). The gospel, truly understood, grounds authentic generosity in the self-giving of Christ: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). **When we understand the depths of Jesus' condescension to raise us from the poverty of our fallenness, we become increasingly willing to dispose of our resources for the benefit of others.**

I pray that tax cuts and larger paychecks will end up helping the poor and needy. But true generosity begins not with an act of Congress but with an act of God. Hearts transformed by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will make a bigger difference in the long run. May the love of God in us open our hearts to the needs around us (1 John 3:17), to seek the good of others (1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:4; Hebrews 13:16), and to be rich in good works (1 Timothy 6:18).

Pastor Isaac

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January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 6:30 Deacons 6:30 Family Ministry	3 6:30 am MBS (Perkins) 6:30 pm Helping Hands	4	5 9:00 am MBS 9:00 am WBS	6
7 9am Wor Team Prac 10 worship/ communion 11:20 SS	8	9 5:45 Finance 6:30 Session	10 6:30 am MBS (Perkins) Noon—RAYS	11	12 9:00 am MBS 9:00 am WBS	13
14 9am Wor Team Prac 10 worship 11:20 SS 3:00-5:00 Youth Event	15	16	17 6:30 am MBS (Perkins)	18	19 9:00 am MBS 9:00 am WBS	20
21 9am Wor Team Prac 10 worship Annual Meeting (no Sunday School)	22	23 6:30 Family Ministry	24 6:30 am MBS (Perkins)	25	26 9:00 am MBS 9:00 am WBS	27
28 9am Wor Team Prac 10 worship 11:20 SS	29	30	31 6:30 am MBS (Perkins)			

Key: **Children's Ministry** MBS—Men's Bible Study WBS—Women's Bible Study Youth Ministry Special Event

Children and Youth

Riverside

Annual Congregational Meeting

January 21st, following worship

All members encouraged to attend to find out **what's been happening at Riverside and how our resources are being used.**

(Non-members welcome to stay.)

Youth Event

Youth grade 5 and up can join us for an afternoon of fun at the church on January **14th from 3:00-5:00**. Feel free to invite your friends! **RSVP to Lisa Myra 320-267-9314 by Friday, Jan. 12**, to let her know how many people are coming so we can plan accordingly.

Who to Contact

Church Office 320-251-5801 Office Hours
 Pastor Isaac Gould M, T, Th 9:00-4:00
 W 12:00-4:00
 320-428-5784 (cell)
 Financial Sec.— Pam Dille Mon. 9:00–12:00
 Secretary – Jane Borrón Tues.-Fri 9:00-1:00
 Treasurer—Mark Johansen (temp) 253-0786
 Custodians—ServiceMaster (contact office)
 Prayer Line—Judy Swanson 320-240-9070

Stated Session Meeting—December 12, 2017
 Minutes are available from the office on request.

Nov. 2017 Stewardship/Worship Summary

Sunday	Offering	Attendance
Nov 5	3641.00	90
12	1773.00	129
19	2592.00	103
26	2379.40	94
Online	2,751.14	
Month Total	13,136.54	Avg 104

General Fund as of 11/30/17

REC Checking Acct (EOM)	44,428.67
Debit card account	576.61
Petty Cash	58.03
TOTAL General Fund	45,073.31

Special Accounts

General Savings Acct	69,986.50
Barnabus Acct	8,225.80
Development Fund	11,605.37
Haiti Fund	14,052.74
Projects Account	23,094.55
Willing Workers	2,674.89
Gordon Scholarship fund	37,829.30
Scholarship CD—F&M	5,345.15
Scholarship CD—F&M	9,148.28
Scholarship CD (Lib)	5,950.83
Scholarship CD (Lib)	5,154.36
Scholarship Sav. Acct	12,230.68

Total Special Accounts 171,675.02

Total Current Assets 216,748.33

Designated Gifts—November 2017

Helping Hands craft sale	968.42
Thanksgiving Eve offering	494.00
(Community offering for Place of Hope)	

Missions Disbursements—November 2017

Pregnancy Resource Center	291.66
YFC—BRAID	166.67
JWM	100.00

January Birthdays

- 1 Tahnee Rudolph
- 2 Levi Markgraf
- 6 Toby Gould
- 8 Missy Gerber
- 12 Mike Dille
- 12 Elana Hanson
- 12 Eli Hanson
- 12 Liz Rogers
- 13 Sara Moorlag
- 18 Jennifer Easterlund
- 18 Holli Zieske
- 27 Linda Paulson
- 28 Jessica Paulson
- 31 Ally Westlund



If we missed your birthday or anniversary, or got it wrong, please call Jane at 251-5801 and let her know so we (hopefully) won't make the same error in the future! Thanks!



January Anniversaries

(None on file)

Your 2018 Elders/Deacons

Elders:	Responsibility Areas	
Matthew Pennertz (16-18)	(A, N)	320-492-1976
Linda Paulson (16-18)	(M)	320-252-7210
Deb Johansen (18) for Jon Moorlag		320-253-0786
Dave Jones (17-19)	(A, WC)	320-267-1054
Mark Olson (17-19)	(WC, P)	320-252-7242
Dennis Woggon (17-19)	(FM, N)	320-393-2709
Joe Newhouse (18-20)		320-469-1038
Rick Petersen (18-20)		320-774-5006

Key: **A** Adult Ed/Small Group **B** Building/Grounds
FM Family Ministry **F** Finance
M Missions **N** Nominating Committee
P Personnel **W** Worship
WC We Care

Deacons:

Deb Koltjes (16-18)	(RS,MM)	320-253-3763
Ruth Tidd (16-18)	(DL,FL,CH)	320-387-2980
Jess Markgraf (18) for Bob Tancre		320-291-3109
Scott Gallion (17-19)	(UG,CP)	320-202-9655
Cindy Glanzer (17-19)	(V, T)	320529-8636
Jay Blomquist (18-19) for Anastacia Licari		320-229-2766
Josh Mumme (18-20)		320-266-7101
Stephen Pennertz (18-20) (S,H)		320-237-1445
Nadine Sagen (18-20)		320-980-9395

Key: **DL** Deacon Liaison (Head Deacon)
CH Coffee Hour **CP** Communion Prep
CS Corresponding Sec. **FS** Food Shelf
FL Funeral Luncheons **H** Hospitality
MM Meals Ministry **RS** Recording Sec.
S Sanctuary **V** Visitations
UG Ushers/Greeters **NC** Nominating Committee
T Transportation

Our Riverside Community

Can you volunteer your time? Use the link on our website to visit SignupGenius.com or click here to volunteer as a [Sunday Servant!](#)



Bible Studies

(at the church unless noted)

Wed. Morning Men's Bible Study
6:30 a.m. weekly—Sartell Perkins

Fri. Morning Men's Bible Study
9:00 a.m.—Sept-May

Fri. Morning Women's Bible Study
9:00 a.m.—Sept-May
New study begins Dec 1—
"1st, 2nd and 3rd Books of John" -
Tony Evans (RightNow Media series)



If you, or a loved one, are in need of prayer,
please contact

Judy Swanson, 320-240-9070 or
Ruth Tidd— 387-2980

to have your prayer request included on
Riverside's confidential prayer chain.



In-Home Communion offered

In-Home Communion will be offered for those who are homebound and unable to attend worship. Please contact Pastor Isaac to make arrangements for a visit.



Sunday mornings provide some of our best fellowship opportunities each week. Can you help in one of the following ways?

Ushers/Greeters

Come a little early and be a friendly face, providing bulletins to guests and regulars, pointing folks in the right direction when needed, and collecting the offering.

Coffee Prep Team

Come early (once every 4-5 weeks) to make the coffee. Easy instructions. Call the office to be added to the rotation.

Coffee Hour Hosts

Coffee hosts keep things running smoothly after worship. While hosts are responsible for both areas below, feel free to partner with friends, or contact a **deacon if you need help and can't find someone to team with.** (Adding a note that you'll need help on SignupGenius is an easy way to do that.)

Responsibilities:

Hosting- set out juice, creamers, cups, napkins, treats, etc., and put away creamers, straighten up at the end of fellowship time including rinsing out the coffee airpots and wiping down the tables and counters.

Treats- bring treats (6-8 doz.—purchased or homemade) for fellowship time after worship.

*Coffee will already be made.
Feel free to sign up with friends.*

See the signup sheet in the kitchen serving window or go to SignupGenius.com to sign up.

Can't make a large treat commitment? Consider bringing a dozen or two freezable cookies/bars in dated Ziploc bags (with your name, please) to keep on hand for "forgotten treat emergencies" or when the crowd is larger than expected. No need to sign up—just bring when convenient and put in the kitchen freezer.

Thank you!

January/February Coffee Host signup is now happening. Use link above or sign up at the kitchen serving window if you can bless your Riverside family in this way.

Ongoing Adult Fellowship Opportunities

R A Y S

R.A.Y.S.—Riverside Always Young Seniors—**2nd Wednesday at Noon.** If you've retired (or just have your lunch hour free!) join us for a pot-luck lunch and fellowship each month. New members are always welcome!
Contact: Ruth Tidd (320) 387-2980.

Couples or Singles

Riverside believes that small groups are a great way to grow lasting friendships, as well as grow in our relationship with God. We have several small groups that meet in members homes or at **Riverside.** If you're interested in joining a small group we'd be glad to work with you to either plug you into an existing group or begin the formation of a new one. **Contact Pastor Isaac**

Men's Opportunities

Wednesday Morning Study - Currently about eight men are meeting at **6:30 AM** at Perkins in Sartell. We order breakfast, and go through various Christian studies while we eat. Sometimes **we're in perfect agreement with one another, sometimes we couldn't disagree more, but we always get along.**
Contact: Dave Jones (320) 267-1054.

Friday Morning Study - This study meets in the Fellowship Hall at **9:00 AM.** (Sept—May) Donuts and coffee are served as we study the Bible together. Men of all ages are welcome.
Contact: Wally Hitchcock (320) 253-7724.

Women's Opportunities

Friday Bible Study - On Fridays at **9:00 AM** (September-May) several women meet here for a time of prayer and Bible study. This study is offered from fall through spring - all women are welcome.
Contact: Ruth Tidd (320) 387-2980.

Helping Hands meets the **1st Wednesday** of the month at 6:30pm. Treats provided. Women of all ages and life stages are welcome.
Contact: Beth Pennertz, (320) 405-8211

Update on Mission to Dubai—Todd Myra

December 15, 2017

THANK YOU for making it possible for me to go on my mission trip to Dubai! I could not have done it without you!

We had over 300 leaders from 41 different countries and 6 continents in attendance! That is an unbelievably diverse group!

The goal of the conference was to form relationships and partnerships between mission organizations all across the globe as they shared resources, best practices, obstacles, and joined together for prayer and worship.

It was so much more than a conference! Of course they had their main speakers, but then afterwards they had round table discussions. They put a list of several questions up on the screen that the group worked through. A table leader then uploaded all the answers to the **group's website.** **The answers will be used to better the organization and learn how to be more effective in missions.**

One interesting thing I learned is that China and Brazil will be a major force in the future of missions! There are an estimated 100 million Christians in China. Also, they are on track to have the highest GNP on the planet. Brazil has 50 million Evangelical Christians. They are currently third in most missionaries sent. (USA, Korea being first and second). Knowing these statistics is incredibly helpful for being strategic in missions.

One of the highlights of the trip was a worship service in the desert under the stars. We heard from a prominent African speaker, sang many songs and had communion. What a powerful experience to share with such a diverse group in such an amazing location!

I so much enjoyed meeting people from all over the world! I now have several new friends from all over the world— Anne from Kenya, Rafik from Egypt, Elias from Brazil, Sanrita from Columbia, and Naeem from Pakistan. Naeem is a pastor who has been in jail 5 times and they burned his church down. Please pray for him and others in countries that are hostile to the gospel.

There were about 75 people who wore red lanyards that signified that they were from countries that were hostile to the gospel. I could not photograph these people because it could not be known that they were at a missions conference.

Please continue to pray for these people that are reaching out to the global church to ignite mission movements to the unreached!

I am so encouraged knowing that my pictures will bless this ministry and will be used on their website, for promotional pieces as well as for blogs and presentations. This will help spread the word and grow excitement for the next conference in Brazil in 2019!

Thanks again for making this happen!!!

Todd Myra

Ph. (320) 251-5801
office@RiversideEPC.org

Office Hours

Pastor—Isaac Gould Mon., Tues., Thurs . 9:00-4:00
320-428-5784 (cell) Wed. 12:00-4:00
pastor@riversideepc.org

Financial Secretary—Pam Dille
Monday (except bank holidays) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Secretary (Jane Borron) office@RiversideEPC.org
Tuesday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
(additional hours possible with prior arrangement)

Happy New Year!

Riverside Vision Statement

Riverside Evangelical Church is called to build a community of saints empowered by the Holy Spirit. We exist to glorify God in all areas of life by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Riverside Mission Statement

Our mission at Riverside Evangelical Church is to further the gospel of Jesus Christ by:

Worshipping and celebrating the presence of God Psalm 16:11

Discipling that brings us to maturity in Christ Matthew 28:19

Equipping us to live our faith in every aspect of life Eph. 4:12

Please contact the church office if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or if your address is incorrect.

405 Riverside Ave. N., PO Box 139
Sartell, MN 56377-0139

Join the Journey

The logo for Riverside Evangelical Church, featuring the word "Riverside" in a stylized font with a blue wave-like underline.