

The River View

Riverside

Join the Journey
www.RiversideEPC.org

May 2020

From the Pastor—

This is now my third month in a row writing in the shadow of the coronavirus. Hang in there! I know there are myriad voices out there flooding us with information, guidance, outrage, fear, and more. We need to stay vigilant in this time, **friends. We need to prioritize worship, even if it's happening on a computer screen in your house.** God is worthy of our attention and praise. His word is powerful (Isa 55:10–11; Heb 4:12), even when preached in a cell phone video played over YouTube!

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“Normal life” is becoming a distant memory. More than ever, we need to re-center ourselves using the means of grace that are available to us: prayer and word of God. Normally, when we in the Reformed and Presbyterian world talk about the means of grace, we add a third, the sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s supper). **We can pray anywhere, of course, even over video connections with the church.** We can, likewise, read the word anywhere, but it is a special privilege to be able to preach to you by video while we cannot gather. But the sacraments are a different matter.

While I haven’t heard of anyone conducting baptisms over Skype or Zoom, there are churches doing remote or virtual communion, and I want to address this for Riverside. Our Session discussed this in **April and decided not to celebrate the Lord’s supper over video. I wanted you to hear the reasons behind this decision.**

The section of 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul gives instructions for communion mentions *gathering together* five times. While our online worship is, in a way, gathering virtually, it is not a *functional* gathering of the church. We cannot see each other, the leadership of the church is uninvolved, and we cannot *share* a meal in any meaningful sense. Without the body of the church present, we would **merely be performing an individualized ritual inferior to our corporate celebration of Christ’s atoning work.**

We believe the sacraments are important means of grace that should not be neglected. Our goal in deferring communion until we are together is to *value* the sacrament and put it in its proper place, not to neglect it. Certain restaurants make chips or peanuts or bread available to diners before the **meal, but that’s not why you’re there. In the same way, communion together is something worth waiting for.**

It is right to feel a sense of loss here, a hunger for the promises of God that are sealed to us in communion for the strengthening of our faith. This is a time of fasting: waiting and longing for a spiritual feast together. It is a time to grieve and lament, to pray and hope. May God grow in all of us a hunger for his grace in the bread and the cup and uphold our faith by the power his Holy Spirit.

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 Borron Tues.-Fri 9:00-1:00
 Treasurer—Mark Johansen 253-0786
 Custodians—ServiceMaster (contact office)
 Prayer Line—Judy Swanson 320-240-9070

Session Meeting March 10, 2020

Minutes are available from the office on request.

Avg Attendance—

Budget Summary - as of March 31, 2020

	Actual	Budgeted
Mar. Income	26,423.88	14,209.00
Mar. Expenses	17,047.97	17,922.76
YTD Income	50,470.24	42,227.00
YTD Expenses	56,033.18	59,011.41
YTD Net Income (loss)	(5,562.94)	

Riverside Planned Mission Support - 2020

Pregnancy Resource Center

YFC—BRAID

Haiti - Hope Orphanage

EPC WO (Burdall, Hamd, McKay)

Chicago 720

Arrive Ministries SENT

Terebinth Refuge

Place of Hope

St. Cloud Christian School

Your 2020 Elders/Deacons

Elders

Rick Petersen (18-20) P, B 320-774-5006
 Deb Johansen (19-20) W, CE 320-253-0786
 Matthew Pennertz (19-21) F, WC 320-405-8212
 Linda Paulson (19-21) M, N 320-420-2921
 Patrick Farrell (19-21) B, W 320-232-3643
 Dave Jones (20-22) N, CE 320-267-1054
 Mark Olson (20-22) P, WC 320-252-7242
 Bruce Glanzer (20-22) F, M 320-290-6818

Key:

B Building/Grounds

CE Family Ministry

M Missions/Outreach

P Personnel

WC We Care

F Finance

N Nominating Committee

W Worship

Deacons:

Josh Mumme (18-20) DL, CH 320-266-7101
 Stephen Pennertz (18-20) S, H 320-237-1445
 Nadine Sagen (18-20) FL, V 320-980-9395
 Mike Beltinck (19-21) UG, CP 320-363-4238
 Deanna Petersen (19-21) CP, FS 320-774-5005
 Gean Wiltgen (19-21) CS, T, MM 320-290-2798
 Jay Blomquist (20-22) FL, V 320-229-2766
 Dave Markgraf (20-22) S, H 320-493-2720
 Christine Morris (20-22) RS,UG 320-292-7022

Key: **DL** Deacon Liaison (Head Deacon)

CH Coffee Hour

CS Corresponding Sec.

FL Funeral Luncheons

MM Meals Ministry

S Sanctuary

UG Ushers/Greeters

T Transportation

CP Communion Prep

FS Food Shelf

H Hospitality

RS Recording Sec.

V Visitations

NC Nominating Committee

May Birthdays

- 1 Joan Pahl
- 6 Mary Lou Olson
- 9 Darwin Kelley
- 11 Scott Stamp
- 12 Rhiney Axel
- 14 Karen Johnson
- 18 Angelina Holte
- 20 Scott Gallion
- 26 Matt Zieske
- 27 Harriette Nelson
- 28 Lindsey Henry
- 28 Nadine Sagen
- 29 Ashley Patterson



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!

May Anniversaries



Dave and Linda Christiansen 5/5
 Matthew & Beth Pennertz 5/21

Q & A WITH PASTOR ISAAC

When will we meet for worship services again?

How I wish I could predict this! The Session and I are listening to and following guidelines from the **White House, the CDC, and the State of Minnesota. By the time Gov. Walz's stay-at-home order expires at the end of the day Sunday, May 3, it is virtually certain to be replaced with some new guidelines. Rather than an "all clear," I expect a gradual return to normal worship.**

What do you mean by a gradual return to normal worship?

We can expect to be subject to social distancing guidelines (6' away from people of other households) and large gathering restrictions for some time. Before we get back to normal worship, there are some intermediate steps we might be able to do once current restrictions are eased. Without committing to anything yet, here are some possibilities people have offered:

- Gathering at home with another household or two for online worship
- Limited-attendance, socially-distanced worship services
- Outdoor worship gatherings

We're going to need to be creative, flexible, and patient in the coming weeks. We may need to make use of the full extent of our available seating, entrances and exits, and be open to new practices for offering, communion, coffee, and treats.

How is everyone? Does anyone need help?

Everyone I have spoken with is managing with admirable Minnesotan tenacity, though this is a stressful time. That stress affects all of us differently and needs to be acknowledged. No one yet has **taken me up on offers of help, but please don't hesitate to ask! We also have assistance available** through the Barnabus Fund for households in need. We are here for one another!

The Gould family is carrying on with life and schooling as usual, especially grateful for nice weather, a yard, imaginations, drawing paper, and bikes. We miss seeing you, worshiping with you, and gathering over shared meals. The boys in particular miss treats after church. 😊

Join us on Sunday mornings at riversideepc.org/sunday or facebook.com/riversideepc to view our worship service and worship guides.

Your home order of service/song sheet, in pdf form, will also be sent out via email each week if you prefer something easy to print out at home.

If you are unable to view our service online the audio portion of the sermon will be available on our website, usually by the following Tuesday. We can also provide CDs (audio only) or DVDs (audio/video) of the sermon. Let us know if you need a copy and which format works for you.

Our Riverside Community

Our June VBS has been cancelled.

A decision on holding it later this year has not yet been made.



Bible Studies

(at the church unless noted)

Wed. Morning Men's Bible Study

6:30 a.m. weekly—
Sartell Perkins

Thurs. Morn-
en's Bible
9:00

ing Wom-
en's Bible
Study

a.m.—Sept-May
Current Study—"Psalm 23"

On hold for the time being—watch for updates

Fri. Morning Men's Bible



P R A Y E R C H A I N

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.

Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving

Riverside wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

[Online Giving](http://RiversideEPC.org) lets you go to RiversideEPC.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history.

As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Authorization forms and additional information are available from the church office.

rightnow MEDIA

Our church subscription to the studies on Rightnow Media continues to be available for all of you to use. There are hundreds of studies and children's content on RightNowMedia.

As part of Riverside's membership, anyone in our congregation is eligible for a free account.

If you haven't signed up for your free account yet, and would like to do so, please contact Pastor Isaac or the office to get the required invitation link sent to you.