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April 2019

THE CASE FOR EASTER REVIVAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of our challenges today is to use this holy season to help others rejoice as we move together toward the remembrance of Good Friday and the great joy of an empty tomb. As we continue to unpack the season of Lent, do you see it as a time of sacrifice, surrender, renewal and revitalization? In the following season, we will continue to examine the biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection and the impact of the empty tomb.

It is a perfect time to celebrate the new life that Christ offers to us. It is a great time to grow deeper in our faith and in our love of God. It is also the perfect time to reach a wider community as we share the joy of knowing the Lord through our words, actions and fellowship.

Helping people connect and stay connected to the church are two major challenges we face today. Some church growth experts call them "front door" and "back door" challenges. The "front door" refers to the act of reaching out to unchurched people. The "back door" covers those actions taken to help attendees grow and stay engaged long-term. Churches can't grow and reach their potential without new people attending. They also can't remain healthy without having fully engaged congregants.

Times are changing. The current technology revolution means most "front door" potential visitors check out a church's website or Facebook online page before deciding to attend. As a result, churches with little or no online presence are left with few "front door" attendees. Those churches tend to focus mostly on "back door" access by trying to increase the attendance of people who are already coming to church, though infrequently. Throughout history, many times revival has come through the back door. But, "front door" outreach approaches are still preferred. I believe an effective online presence is the "front door" of most growing churches in the 21st century and is the biggest "front door" the church has ever seen!

What does a growing church look like? To be a growing church, the number of first-time visitors over a year's time should be at least equal to the number of people we average in attendance each week. A typical growing church will continue to keep a large percentage of those guests in attendance as they mature into regular, active participants in the church. Do you know we have over 270 "members" who attend throughout the year, but our average attendance is less than 100? In addition, many of those in attendance have not taken membership in our church. Our attempt this year is to bring the same number of first-time visitors annually through our front door.

How do we migrate first-time visitors and casual attendees into actively engaged, steady attendees? We need to let them know we care and genuinely focus on welcoming them with an irresistible experience. We can then truly live up to the calling that we are to be a "caring community". It requires those who are the core members of the church to experience a revival.

The word 'revival' means to bring back to life, restore to consciousness or to restore to the previous condition. The revival in the biblical language is not emotionalism and is not evangelism. Rather, it is an intentional renewal of an individual's spiritual life as a functional part of a dedicated group of Christians. It is a heartfelt return to God and His Word. It makes a prodigal say to the father, "I have sinned". How can one be healed who is not sick, and be satisfied with the bread of life who is not hungry?

Unfortunately, everything in this modern age is shallow...the consequence is that men leap into religion, and then leap out again. "Un-humble they came to the church, un-humble they remained in it, and un-humble they go from it", said C.H. Spurgeon.

I pray that this season will open new doors in your lives and expand your experience of personal faith development. I also pray that it will enhance your lives through a focus on the historic spiritual disciplines that include prayer, study, fasting, service and a spirit of generosity.

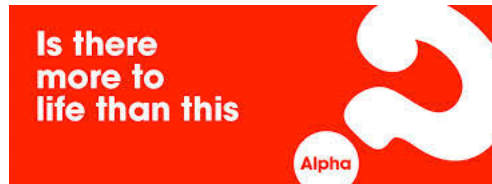
Thanks for being a part of the RiversEdge United Methodist Church family! I celebrate your journey of faith and give thanks for the ways God is leading our church.

Yours in Christian Love, Pr. Binu Peniel



As we approach Easter, why not put a little preparation for a great Celebration of the Risen Christ. There is a special Adult Bible Study called 'He Chose the Nails'. Come join us at **9:15 a.m. on Sunday** mornings. Every gift from God reveals his love, but no gift reveals his love more than the gifts of the cross. In this five-session video Bible study, Max Lucado explores the many gifts that Christ provided to us at his crucifixion. The hill of the cross is rich with the gifts of God's grace. These were gifts he didn't have to give. We need to pause and listen for his voice. As we do, perhaps we will hear him whisper, "I did it just for you." Sessions include:

- 1) He Chose to Be One of Us
- 2) He Chose to Forgive Us
- 3) He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence
- 4) He Chose to Love Us Forever
- 5) He Chose to Give Us Victory



Alpha on a weekday at RiversEdge will be on **Wednesdays** at **6:00 p.m.** Alpha is a series of interactive sessions that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith. Alpha is for anyone who's curious. The talks are designed to encourage conversation and explore the basics of the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment. No question is out of bounds and you are free to discuss as much or as little as you wish. Each session includes a short talk and a discussion at the end where you can share your thoughts. There's no pressure, no follow-up and no charge.

Holy Week and Easter Services



Come Worship With Us!

Holy Week begins with a **Palm Sunday** worship service on **April 14**, followed by a **Holy Thursday** worship service at **7:00 p.m. on April 18**. Then on **Easter Sunday** morning, the 8:00 a.m. 1st worship service will be a regular service and the **10:30 a.m.** 2nd worship service will be a celebration featuring the choir and special music. **Easter Breakfast** will be served from **9:00-10:00 a.m.** (with cleanup afterwards). There will be no 9:15 Sunday morning classes.

FOOD PANTRY



The King's Closet

Monthly **Food Pantry** Day is **April 26**. We will have our **King's Closet** upstairs at the Annex. We have clothes, other small items or produce for local people to take and use, if they need it. Bring items all month. It comes in free and goes out free, no charge. Anything left over will be taken to Good Will or South Side Missions.



If you are interested in purchasing an Easter Lily to donate to our Easter service, please let Judy know (jude187@msn.com or 645-6625). Also let her know if you want them dedicated to someone. The cost this year will be \$8. Please be sure to take them home after the church service.



Take Me Out to the Ballgame! Contemporary Christian music star Chris August will perform after the Peoria Chief's game along with an Adult Replica Jersey Giveaway (1st 1,000 fans age 13 & up) and Post-Game Fireworks on **Saturday, June 22** as part of 'Faith & Family Night'. The game starts at **6:35 p.m.** See Joe Helms (635-3508) if you are interested.

CHANGES IN THE CHURCH: CHANGES IN WORSHIP

The 2nd service worship planning team has been discussing how to change the order of the service to make it flow better. You may see changes being made over the next few Sundays. Change can be difficult or seem confusing. Please bear with us.

STEP-UP AND SERVE.

USE WHATEVER GIFT YOU HAVE TO SERVE OTHERS.

10:30 a.m. **WORSHIP SERVICE HELPERS** are still needed. If you are interested in ushering, reading scripture, greeting or being an acolyte, please sign up on the Schedule Sheet in the back of the sanctuary. Also, if you are interested in doing a children's message, see Pastor Binu. There is room on the signup sheet for other **SPECIALS** (solos, duets, reading, etc.). If you are interested, please contact Judy at 822-8770 or 645-6625.

We still need one **SUNDAY SCHOOL** teacher. We are working towards having two teachers per class. Please talk with April Nauman if you'd like to help. Please help us raise the next generation of Christians.

The **PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM** is looking for singers and musicians. If you have any interest learning more, please contact Jarrod Doty at church, by email at jdoty69@gmail.com or by phone at 657-8904.

NURSERY—PAID POSITION. Need an adult to assist/oversee the nursery on Sunday mornings. See Matt Freeman or Ron Call if you are interested or know of anyone that might be or if you would like additional information.



A group of church members and myself have been working on making changes and updates to our church nursery and are excited about the progress made so far! There are some furniture pieces from the nursery sitting at the top of the ramp in the fellowship hall to be claimed or taken. These items are free.

Our goals are to have a nursery designed and equipped to minister to children from birth to four years of age. With these changes, it is our desire to have a room that is environmentally safe and clean, to create an atmosphere that young children are excited to be a part of and to give parents confidence (the best we can on our end) that their precious children are safe and being well cared for by loving and trustworthy caregivers and volunteers. We believe even the youngest of our church members can learn about God through age-appropriate teaching tailored for each little one. We plan to provide the caregivers and volunteers the tools to minister to the children in the nursery and promote a Christ-centered atmosphere.

As we make changes to our nursery, we also want to provide opportunities for our youth that are ready to move on from the nursery, but not quite ready to sit through an entire church service. Several members of the congregation have expressed excitement for creating a Children's Church opportunity for this age group. Although we are in the beginning stages, we are excited to expand our children's ministry to better serve the children and families of our church and community.

We appreciate your prayers as we work hard to expand and improve our children's ministry. If there is something on your heart or mind you would like to share, volunteer or donate, feel free to contact myself or Pastor Binu.

Thank you and I pray you join us in our excitement for making RiversEdge United Methodist Church a great opportunity for our youth to learn about Christ's love.

Submitted by: Jaymie Freeman, jaymie.freeman@babybootcamp.com, 309-657-8902



Scan the QR code at the end of the newsletter with your smart phone or visit riversedgeumc.org. You will find the newsletters, calendars and announcements. Check out new pictures/videos that have been added. If you see pictures that you are in and would like them removed, please let Judy Schaer know.

Submitted by: Communications Committee



John Schaer is still collecting **ALUMINUM CANS** to recycle. CANS only, no aluminum disposable pans or other items. You may leave them in the entry area of the river side of the church or call John at 822-8770 if you would like him to pick them up. When he gets a truck load, he takes them to the recycle center. Not only will this help the earth, but the money will go to the Church account.

- ◆ There were 23 units of blood collected at the church blood drive which is the 2nd highest total.
- ◆ Joe Helms expressed joy to have family visiting from Michigan and ask for prayers for a safe travel home.
- ◆ Doug Doty has a joy that Carla's healing is coming along. He thanks everyone for their prayers and asks for a good pathology report.
- ◆ Roger & Marilyn Hodge have been married 66 years.
- ◆ Orda Doty was back to worship with us after her health issues.

Midwest Mission



Distribution Center

The Midwest Mission Distribution Center of the United Methodist Church provides disaster relief supplies around the world. Supplies bought through DollarDays (<https://www.dollardays.com/midwestmission/wishlist.html>) would be the best way to donate, as they are shipped directly to MMDC at the Center's bulk prices. Any donations would be greatly appreciated. Monetary donations may be sent to:

MMDC, 1001 Mission Drive, Pawnee, IL 62558
www.midwestmissiondc.org | office@midwestmissiondc.org

Current Disaster Response



Severe Weather in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee Wildfires in California

Hurricane Michael (Alabama – West Florida - South Georgia), Hurricane Florence (South Carolina) & Hurricane Maria (Puerto Rico)

Earthquakes and Tsunami in Indonesia Typhoon Mangkut

To support relief efforts consider a gift to U.S. Disaster Response at https://secure3.convio.net/gbgm/site/PageNavigator/umcor_donate.html?type=1002&project=901670

EASTER EGGS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
 — JOHN 20:31 NIV





April 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 6:00 p.m. Alpha 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	4 6:00 p.m. Trustees	5	6
7 5:30 p.m. O.U.R. @ the Schaer's	8	9 7:00 p.m. Ad Council	10 4:00 p.m. 1st Svc. Worship Planning 6:00 p.m. Alpha 7:00 p.m. 2nd Svc. Wor- ship Planning	11	12	13
14 Palm Sunday 8:00 a.m. 1st Service 10:30 a.m. 2nd Service	15	16 7:00 p.m. Staff/Parish	17 6:00 p.m. Alpha 7:00 p.m. Choir—TBA	18 7:00 p.m. Holy Thursday Service	19 	20
21 Easter Sunday 8:00 a.m. 1st Service 9-10 a.m. Easter Breakfast 10:30 a.m. 2nd Service	22	23	24 6:00 p.m. Alpha	25	26 9-11 a.m. Food Pantry/ King's Closet	27
28	29 6:30 p.m. 4-H	30				

Our Motto "The Church That Cares"

Our Mission

"Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

OUR VISION

"Our vision is to meet the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors through our witness, welcome and nurture ."

WORSHIP SERVICES:

Sunday 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

NURSERY:

Sunday 8-11:45 a.m. (infant-kindergarten)

SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUPS : 9:15-10:15 a.m.

D.O.C.K. (Preschool – 5th grade)

Youth (grades 6 – 12)

Sunday Morning (All Ages)

CHOIR PRACTICE: (7th grade-Adult)

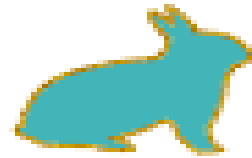
September through May

7 p.m. Wednesday evenings, as announced

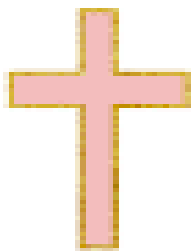
O.U.R.: Outwardly Upwardly Righteously

(first Sunday of month)

EASTER IS MORE THAN
TREATS TO MAKE YOU GRIN.
LET US NEVER FORGET,
He took the world's sin!



PLENTY OF CANDY, BUNNIES,
AND EGGS BY THE DOZEN.
HOWEVER, WE CELEBRATE EASTER
BECAUSE *He has risen!*



Our redeemer lives,
THIS NEWS IS SO SWEET!
Remember Him WHEN
YOU ENJOY YOUR EASTER TREAT.



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