

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

AUGUST 2019

In this issue:

- All the Best
- Congratulations, Newlyweds!
- Family Profile
- Diamond Willow Trip
- Fusion: Volunteers Are Vital to Ministry

At Riverside Community Church, we believe that when God brings a person into a relationship with Himself, He also brings him/her into a family relationship in the local church. There is more than just believing. There is also belonging. This newsletter is intended to help those of us who are part of this church family grow in our relationship with God and each other. We want to stay in touch with one another. We want to share what God is doing in our midst.

- Kerry Nenn, Editor

All the Best

By Pastor Paul Sommerfeld

I think it's safe to say that we all have a desire for good things: a good job, a good marriage, good health, good friends, good times, and more. Even the Bible speaks of good news, good gifts, good deeds, good fruit, and so on. Who wouldn't want things which we feel are good?

I believe this universal longing for good things is God-given, because even God wants good things for His children. He says in Romans 8:28 that "In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose," (Romans 8:28). He says, "How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:11). This is because goodness is part of God's nature. All that He does is good and right all of the time. And with God, good doesn't just mean better-than-average; it means the very best.

So if we want good things for ourselves, and God wants us to have good things, why is there often such a disconnect between what we want and what God wants for us? Why do we pursue things that are contrary to God's will? It's because our sense of good is limited and distorted. It's limited because we are limited. James 4:14 says, "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow." And it's distorted by our sin nature. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."

This is why we need to seek the Lord's wisdom and direction in everything, and when He reveals it, we need to follow it. God wants the very best for us, and He alone knows that which is best. So in every situation, we should ask, "God, would this be good for me, or would you have something better?" When we ask this earnestly, He will give us the wisdom to know His will and the power to obey it.

The Apostle Paul wrote this to the Philippians: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ," (Philippians 1:9-10). That is my hope and prayer for each of us as well.

Wishing you all the best,
Paul

Congratulations, Newlyweds!

By Debra Sommerfeld

July 6th: a joyous celebration at Riverside - the marriage of Jason & Katie!

Pastor Jason has taught *The Image of God*, with the admonition to avoid idols, even idols of relationships. He reminded us: "When I have learnt to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now." -- C.S. Lewis. This we have seen with Jason and Katie's relationship, as they strive to put God above all, allowing His love to overflow to others.

(continued on page 3)



FAMILY PROFILE

Meet Pam Hendricks



Favorite Hangout

Home

Favorite Movie

To Kill a Mockingbird

Favorite Book

No favorite except for the Bible, of course! I love to read and have several books going right now, all Christian non-fiction, except I am reading the *Little House on the Prairie* books for the first time and really enjoying them.

Favorite Game

Not a game player. When I was a kid, I loved the game Clue.

Three words that best describe your family

Close, Supportive, Generous

Where are you on a typical Saturday night?

At home either alone or entertaining family or friends.

How did you hear about RCC? How long have you been attending?

I heard about RCC through Impact Bible Study, and Barb Wilson invited me to visit. I've been here about one year.

In your opinion, what is the best thing about RCC?

The clear teaching of God's Word and the people. And the stretch break is pretty nice, too!

Kids'/Pets names and ages

Suki, my Yorkie, is almost 15. No children, but I love being Aunt Pam to my nieces and nephew and to my two great-nieces! So much fun!

7 PEOPLE. 8 DAYS. IMMEASURABLE IMPACT.

Fort Thompson, SD: A settlement on the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation. Unemployment here is at around 85%, and most of the population is on tribal welfare. The county is in the top 10 poorest in the country. Suicide and drug, alcohol, and sexual abuse are prevalent.

In the midst of these conditions shines the light of Diamond Willow. With only 50 members, Diamond Willow Ministries is too small to run their own VBS (summer camps), so other churches bring volunteers to help with the four weeks of camp, which serve 30-50 kids each.

Enter RCC. Each summer, a team from Riverside travels to South Dakota to help with one of the camps. This year, the team consisted of Monica and Lexi Scull, Joe and Carol Masin, Joshua Salerno, Cole Souza, and Stephen Kaufman.



As always, God was at work during this trip. Here's a taste of what He's doing through this ministry:

"On the reservation and in the community, I can sometimes be overwhelmed by the feeling that the devil is winning with these people. The powerful hold that evil has on this community becomes very apparent in things like the suicide rate, the overwhelming amount of boarded up meth houses, and the number of parents in jail. But then there are moments that I have at camp, when I am spending time with the children of the community, that just fill me up with hope and reveal to me that even though sometimes it seems like the devil is winning, God is always working and fighting our battles, and in the end God will always prevail. I am reminded of the verse John 10:10 that says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." The camp that we help at and the time that we share with these girls are ways to bring these girls to a life with Christ. It is a very special and encouraging time."

- Lexi Scull



"What has been the most encouraging to me is the relationships we've built and formed with the staff and the kids. We're able, as a local church body, to support and encourage another ministry trying to reach a lost people group. We are also watching these kids grow up and year after year follow up with them. For me personally, too, is the ability to deepen the relationships with each other as we serve together as a church family. Every year it's a different group of people that God puts together, and it's really neat to see the intergenerational teamwork as well as get to truly know each other better."

- Monica Scull

Friends—Loving God and One Another

DIAMOND WILLOW: GOD AT WORK

(continued from page 2)

“What impressed me this year was the slow but steady progress that Diamond Willow is having on introducing real Christianity to the reservation. We teach the kids Bible verses by using gestures to help recall the key words for repetition. This year, I got about halfway through a verse with one of the young ladies when she recited the rest of the verse without prompting. When I asked how she did that, she said she must have remembered it from last year. The verses that emphasize God’s love and care for mankind are especially important in a place where suicide and destructive lifestyles are so prevalent. - Joe Masin



“My favorite part about this recent trip to Diamond Willow is seeing the growth in the girls I served the year prior. It is very fulfilling for me to know that the girls that I worked with last year have become more Christlike. I am especially referring to two girls named Lynlie and Mary Jane, who I remember from last year being rebellious and inattentive. I remember pouring forth my effort to set a good example for them, and I took every chance I could get to verbalize Jesus’ love for them. Upon meeting them again this year, I was greeted by two loving and patient girls, and they remembered a good deal of the Bible stories they learned. This is renewing and meaningful to me because this proves to me this ministry has merit, that these children have hope, and that God is working in the lives on the reservation.” - Cole Souza



“One of my favorite moments from the trip was on the last day of camp when the girls sat in the sanctuary and learned about the story of Jesus. Afterwards, during classroom time, it was just so awesome to hear a bunch of the girls not just repeat what they heard during the lesson, but put it into their own words. It was just so cool to witness God’s hand at work in these little girls’ lives through Diamond Willow.” - Josh Salerno



RCC NEWLYWEDS

(continued from page 1)

Outside, the weather was perfect. Inside, our cross was adorned with gorgeous flowers, and our sanctuary was filled with remembrance, worship, and rejoicing.

Places were set aside for Jason’s father and sister to honor their lives lived well, dedicated to Jesus. The bride and groom led everyone in worship to “Be Thou My Vision.”

Jason’s long-time mentor, Vincent Loftis, officiated the ceremony. Traveling from Scotland, Rob Bell, with his wife Louise by his side, delivered an encouraging message. They had witnessed the beginning when the two young ones met in Scotland.

The blessing prayer was given by Pastor Paul, who has thoroughly enjoyed working with Jason. Both bride and groom had waited faithfully for God to bring them together, and with great rejoicing, they were pronounced man and wife!

Pictures were taken outside, then evening dinner included Katie serenading her groom, much to his surprise. Tears all around... and dancing! The Scottish friends led everyone in the Cèilidh (kay-lee), which had been the couple’s first dance together in Scotland.

Her father toasted, “Katie, you had the courage to say no to less than God’s best. Jason is God’s best for you.”



Returning home from Cancun, the newlyweds were so blessed with the generous donations to stock their pantry.

We are thankful to have Jason & Katie at Riverside, and we look forward to what God will do with all of us together as a church family.

Congratulations, Mr. & Mrs. Custer!

Upcoming Events

August

- 14 Ladies of Literature 10 am - 12 pm @ church
- 18 Ministry Kick-Off @ church

September

- 7 Recalibrate - Men’s Study 7-9 am @ church
- 13 & 14 LATTE Crafting Event @ church



Volunteers Are Vital to Ministry

The real backbone of any ministry is the volunteers - without them, most ministries would not (and could not) exist. That is just as true of Fusion as it is of Riverside Community Church as a whole. This month, I had the privilege of seeing just how valuable faithful volunteers are. It was such a blessing to be able to focus on my wedding knowing that there were capable volunteers who cared about Fusion making sure it ran well (if not better) in my absence for two weeks.

This month, I want to recognize the volunteers that are essential to making Fusion happen each week. Every Wednesday night (for some years, actually), our small group leaders (Debra Sommerfeld, Luke Bossert, and Jamie Brouwer - and more recently, Katie Custer) have been giving their time and pouring into our students as they play, worship, and learn about God together. These volunteers come alongside the students to build relationships and to point them to a deeper walk with God. Fusion could not happen without them - and I want to say a huge Thank You! to each of them.



1 Peter 4:10 says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." So thank you Fusion leaders for being faithful stewards and serving with your gifts and time!

- Pastor Jason

If you are interested in volunteering with Fusion in the fall (whether as a trip chaperone, leading a small group weekly, teaching periodically, or serving in some other capacity), please contact Pastor Jason at jason.custer@rccstc.org.

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