

Riverside Reader

... a biblically-based, cost-compassionate, small-camp experience

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Making All Things New

By Breanna Plank

In the past year, I have seen a lot of pain, anger, and sadness. Stress has compounded, and it can be difficult to cope with. If someone tries to imagine a perfect day today, it is definitely more of a fantasy than reality. When we try to create a perfect day for ourselves, something always interferes. Of course, that doesn't mean the day was ruined. We can still have a nice day, but it will never be perfect. I recently heard that people who experience trauma often need counseling to heal from their experience, because otherwise they will return to the trauma. We may ask why anyone would do such a thing and revert to the things that broke them. It is because those things feel familiar, and therefore feel more real and are easier to connect to. For myself, I tend to even embrace imperfections when I see them. They are almost endearing, because it makes things feel normal and more real to me.

The world is broken, and a byproduct of that is that all the people in this world are broken, too. Unfortunately, a broken cup cannot repair itself. It needs something else to join its pieces back together. There is actually a Japanese art form called *kintsugi* where broken china or pottery is repaired using resin or lacquer mixed with gold powder or other precious metals, which highlight the cracks made, but reflect a new kind of beauty as a result. While most people would think the point of a repair is to try to make a piece look as close to the way it was before it was damaged, the heart behind the *kintsugi* method of repair is that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken. Imagine in a similar way how Jesus' redeeming power takes our brokenness and makes us new creatures. Instead of trying to mask our faults and look like we have our lives completely together, we find a new purpose in Christ. Our faults now glorify His power, because people now realize that Christians are not perfect, just like them, but they are healed.

Summer camp this year was filled with stories of campers who were searching for Jesus and found healing. We have at least 27 campers whom we know accepted Christ for the first time, and many more commitments to Christ. We pray for all these young people after returning home from camp that God continues to work in their lives at home. Here are a few snapshots of the way God worked at Riverside.

One camper came forward after a chapel session, totally heartbroken as she relayed the details of her infant brother dying. As she recalled the traumatic event, it was apparent that she felt some level of responsibility for this event she had no part in causing. She found healing as she was assured she was not at fault for her brother's death, and that God was with her and everyone else involved in the situation. Later that week, she expressed that she believed God brought her to camp because He knew her heart would be opened.

After talking with a single mom striving to find ways to minister and be a spiritual leader to her children, I heard about how our camp prompted her son to discuss his experience at camp. This opened opportunity for the mom to talk about God and His connection with us.

One cabin had three campers who accepted Christ at camp. They initially felt a little awkward about this new decision that so many people witnessed them make. When gathering for breakouts after the session, the cabin leaders decided to pray with these three girls about their decision. During prayer, the other campers in the cabin also jumped in to pray with their new-found sisters in Christ. It was truly a special time of celebrating and connecting with God that left most in tears of joy.

One camper felt compelled to share his testimony during guy's night out at Junior High
(continued on page 4)

Farming During Summer Camp

by Tessa Olson

Down at the farm we are immersed in God's amazing creation every day. We are an incredibly blessed staff, seeing beautiful sunsets, witnessing live births, and interacting with each uniquely different animal every day. There are not many opportunities to work both as a missionary and on a farm, and for that we are very grateful.

During the Junior camp, I had the privilege to give a tour to that week's speaker, Hope Radebaugh. She was blown away by the property and loved each animal. Her smiles, interest, and kind words were a great reminder that the farm isn't just for kids. She insisted that a farm visit would truly be an unforgettable time for these campers and we couldn't agree more!

Throughout the summer we were able to lead multiple tours and teach the campers about God's carefully crafted handiwork in each animal. I personally heard several kids say they couldn't wait to come back next year.

Farm visits are an incredibly unique experience for each camper, whether they come from a small town or a large one, there is always something new to learn!



We are excited to offer more farm visits and are hoping to host several field trips from local schools this fall.

Also during the Junior camp, our pure-bred Red Wattle Hog, Ember, gave birth to 11 healthy piglets! This was an amazing experience for the RSI farm crew to witness a live birth, even if they were a little grossed out at the time. It has been a joy to watch these 11 babies grow over the last several weeks. They have at least doubled in size and are beginning to eat their mama's feed along with her milk. God blessed us with these piglets that we will be able to raise for butcher. Although it may be sad to think about their intended purpose, River Hills will be able to use any profit from

them to help grow our ministry even further.

Like any other farm, there are always concerns about predators. Especially this summer, it seems as though it is a major problem for us. There is a fox, a hawk, and possibly a raccoon or some kind of weasel that frequents our land. We are constantly learning new ways to protect our animals, but would love your support through prayer! ■

Building Connections at Riverside

By Breanna Plank

As the primary rental administrator, I am accustomed to taking calls and answering inquiries about renting out the camp facilities during the periods when we do not have any camp programs happening. Since taking over this task two years ago, I have had the great opportunity to correspond with churches, ministry groups, and families all across the state. My communication largely consists of logistical things, such as amenities and activities, but there is the occasion where I get a deeper glimpse into the story of those I'm assisting. It could be a family who is hoping to spend a weekend all together before a loved one passes away. Sometimes it's a bunch of pastors who want to affirm and encourage each other as they also take time to connect with their families. Men's, women's, and youth ministries have chosen Riverside as a location to come together and connect more with God and each other.

Although not as significant as our relationship with God, the Bible constantly speaks on the importance of fellowship and connection with other believers. During our regularly scheduled programs, it is always our focus to implement opportunities to connect with God and other people. As staff, we also make it a point to find ways to strengthen

our own relationships with each other as well as building our own community because we understand how doing so impacts our lives. When communicating with guest groups who want to use Riverside's facilities, it's always fascinating to hear about the vision they have for the time they are spending at camp. Riverside is being used year-round as a vessel for others to connect and experience God's presence while at Riverside.

Currently, nearly every weekend in the next 12 months is booked, and we have even started filling up weekdays. When reviewing the calendar, the idea of all the people who will be spending their time here to grow in faith and community is thrilling. We have several regular groups who make the same reservations every year, and that number is consistently growing. These groups see the value in taking time away to connect on a deeper level. It is incredible and humbling to think of how God allows us to have a part in ministering to so many people. We hope that our ministry will continue to grow as the Lord provides, and that our guest group services will also be able to increase in impact as a result. ■

What's Cooking at Adventure Camp?

By Lisa Rouse

Adventure Camp is very aptly named. It is always just that—an ADVENTURE. This year's summer camp theme is "Made for This." I decided to turn that theme on its head a little bit and create a Kamp Kitchen where every lesson involved some kind of hands-on activity that required the kids to make something that related to the lesson.

Our first lesson was all about good ol' PB&J. I stood in front of 26 kids and told them I had NO idea how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and did ONLY what they told me to do. I had an entire room of (frustrated) kids shouting instructions and they watched in disbelief as I put together the MESSIEST sandwich they had ever seen. The kids learned a new word—INTERPRET. We talked about how we each interpret instructions differently. There are a lot of instructions given to us that SOUND good and SOUND Biblical—but the only true instructions for life come right from God through the Bible. The kids then donned aprons and chef's hats and made their own PB&J sandwiches—and each one of them looked better than mine!

Our second lesson was all about cake. Each kid received the ingredients for cake. Vegetable oil, baking powder, baking cocoa etc. The looks on their faces as they tasted each ingredient was priceless. Especially the baking cocoa. They were expecting chocolatey goodness. I asked how many of them liked cake and it was unanimous. Then I told them that each of the things they had just tasted are IN CAKE. We talked about how there may be "bad" things that come into our lives. When we look at each of those circumstances, we can get a discouraged.

But God can take every one of those "bad" situations and make it in to something good. We don't always see the big picture, but God does so we have to trust Him and the plans He has for our lives. The kids got to frost and decorate their own mini cupcakes to help them remember the lesson.

That night we also learned about the fruits of the Spirit. We talked about what each one of the fruits "looked like" in a practical way. We read a book called *Maybe God's Like That* and it helped the kids understand what those fruits of the Spirit might look like in their world every day. Then we put our aprons and chef's hats on and made fruit pizzas. They bagged them up to take home the next day.

Our last lesson was about the armor of God. I used an orange to show the kids what happens when we forget to put on even ONE of the pieces of armor. Each time I forgot to put on a piece of armor I took away a piece of the peeling and put it in a large bucket of water, which signified the world around us and the people in it. And each time it sank just a little bit more. When all of the armor (peel) was removed it sank all the way to the bottom of the bucket. The kids got to take home an orange to help them remember this lesson as well.

Kids this age remember lessons so much better when they can connect them to items they see in everyday life. Our Made for This—Cookin' with Jesus Adventure Camp gave them this opportunity. Psalm 34:8a says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" and we did just that! ■



New Camp, New Frontier

by Lucero Wonnacott

The TREK Teen Adventure Program was a new addition to Riverside's Summer Programming this year, and it was a big success! This program is built for ten 14-18 year old campers who wish to explore God's creation in a small group experience away from camp. Lucero Wonnacott (Assistant Program Director) and volunteer Abby Patten led this group of six campers on an adventure we hope they will never forget. The group spent two days here at Riverside getting to know each other, diving into God's Word, building each other up as a team, and enjoying the creation that God put here for us. On the third day, the Trekkers embarked on a four and a half hour trip up to the UP of Michigan. They stopped at a waterfall a few hours up to explore and eat lunch, then arrived at their campsite at McLain State Park just north of Houghton, MI. They had the privilege of camping in their tents just about a hundred feet from the shore of Lake Superior.

Over the next few days, the campers were given the chance to bond with each other by telling stories, playing games, and enjoying all the places that they were able to experience. They spent the first evening on a black sand beach a short drive from their campsite where they skipped rocks, swam in the not so summery waters of Lake Superior, cooked burgers over an open fire, and walked out onto the breakers at the opening of the canal. Over the next two days the Trekkers explored a rocky beach close to the point of the peninsula, hiked up a bluff overlooking the Keweenaw Bay, visited a monastery and its attached

bakery and jam shoppe, and ate lunch and studied atop a mountain overlooking the whole of the peninsula. They got to experience how various and wonderful God's creation is, while coming to understand how they can be more like Him.

Throughout this week of adventure, the Trekkers also studied a book for an hour a day that taught them ways to be leaders in their daily lives in a Christian way. It sparked conversation on how to take initiative in relationships with others, how to seek peace in conflict, and how to lead like Jesus led. In the evenings they also had the opportunity to hear messages about how God is working in their lives. The last evening, they had a very engaging conversation on the creation that is to come after the judgement day. They looked at Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation, especially 21:3 where it says "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'" This was the whole point of this adventure—to dwell with God in His creation like we will in a whole new way when we are taken to Him on the Last Day.

We will be running the TREK program again next summer and hope it becomes another way for campers to experience God through Riverside and to grow as young Christian leaders in this world. Please look out for when TREK will be running next summer and consider whether you or someone you know would enjoy this new opportunity! ■

All Things New *(continued from page 1)*

Camp. When other campers were nervous about opening up, he chose to be bold and share his story of faith with his cabin mates and his cabin leaders.

We've heard many other reports about campers being on fire for God and seeking Him more through Bible reading. We are passionate

about helping people know, grow in, and share Christ with others, and as the stories keep coming in, we are looking forward to seeing what God does with these young people as the next generation in His Church. Please be in prayer for all the campers who attended this summer, and praise be to God for the work He is doing in their lives. ■

Sustaining Riverside Financial Report: 2021–2022 *(beginning 8/16/21)*

	YEAR TO DATE	BUDGET
General Fund Income	\$41,301	\$150,000
General Fund Expense	\$41,273	\$150,000
Current Surplus	\$28	

Praising the Lord for His provision during a year of many uncertainties.





HARVEST FAMILY CAMP

OCTOBER 1ST-3RD, 2021

COST PER PERSON

- \$65 - SINGLE
 - \$125 - COUPLE
 - \$165 - FAMILY OF 4
 - \$190 - FAMILY OF 5
 - \$215 - FAMILY OF 6+
 - FAMILY = 1 FAMILY UNIT
-

Fellowship Supper

DELICIOUS
DINNER

SUMMER
REVIEW

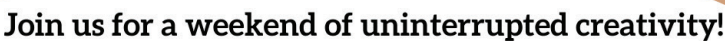
HONORS
CEREMONY



EVENING
SERVICE

YUMMY
DESSERT

GREAT
FELLOWSHIP



EVENTS

Mark your calendars!

Summer Family Camp.....	August 20-22 nd , 2021
Harvest Family Camp.....	October 1-3 rd , 2021
Fellowship Supper and Celebration Service.....	October 2 nd , 2021
Lumberjack Day.....	October 16 th , 2021
Craft Camp.....	October 15-17 th , 2021
Christmas Open House.....	December 2 nd , 2021
New Year's Eve Party.....	December 31 st , 2021
Riverside in Haiti.....	January 2022
Elevate Young Adults Winter Retreat.....	January 14-16 th , 2022
Infuse.....	February 11-13 th , 2022
Ignite.....	February 25-27 th , 2022
GRIT Men's Retreat.....	March 25-26 th , 2022
RSI Training Camp.....	April 1-3 rd , 2022
The Heart of a Pioneer Woman.....	April 30 th , 2022
Marriage Café.....	February 22 nd , March 29 th , and April 26 th , 2022
Work Day.....	May 14 th , 2022
Spring Open House and Pancake Breakfast.....	May 28 th , 2022
VBS and Day Camp.....	June 13-17 th , 2022
Family Fun Night.....	June 17 th , 2022
Senior High Camp.....	June 19-25 th , 2022
TREK Teen Adventure Camp.....	July 26-31 st and August 7-12 th , 2022
Adventure Camp.....	July 6-8 th , 2022



6355 County Road DD
Amherst, WI 54406
riversidebiblecamp.org
715.824.3198

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WANTED

Over the years, many in-kind donations have been given to Riverside. These gifts are a wonderful blessing to the ministry and provide needed resources. Please check out our list of current needs, and if you can help with an item or provide funds to purchase it, let us know.

- 1,000-gallon LP tank
- PTO driven generator (35,000 Watt)
- Tire balancer
- Kickballs
- Paint brushes – assorted sizes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ ton 4x4 pickup truck
- Small kitchen washcloths
- Oven hot mitts