

Riverside Reader

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- Main Article 1
- Summer Family Camp/
Director's Advance 2
- Harvest Camp | Craft Camp 3
- Stewardship 4
- Lumberjack Day/
Homecoming Camp 5
- Upcoming Events 6
- Calendar | Most Wanted 7

Banished for our Benefit

by Elyse Erdahl, Administrative Assistant

Have you ever wondered why God forced Adam and Eve to leave the Garden of Eden after they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It may seem like an odd story to fixate on as Christmas approaches, but I've recently heard a perspective that has completely changed my view of that story.

I remember the first time I read Genesis in college, and there was one verse that didn't sit well with me. Genesis 3:22-23 says,

“And the Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden...”

God's response to Adam and Eve's sin was to banish them from the good and beautiful garden that He created for them. Forever. He placed angels wielding flaming swords at the entrance to guarantee that mankind would never be able to return. As a new Christian at the time, and for many years afterward, I could not understand why God would do that.

It didn't strike me as particularly loving to deny His beloved creation access to life. If I'm being completely honest, it actually came across as somewhat prideful of God to say that He didn't want us to be like Him. But, God loves us. More than we will ever be able to fully comprehend this side of Heaven, possibly ever.

When Adam and Eve ate from that tree, everything changed. The sinless world God had created for them was sinless no more. Denying them the opportunity to then eat from the tree of life was a loving act of great mercy. A fact that I think is often overlooked is the fact that both trees were present in the garden from its creation. So, what would have happened if Adam and Eve ate from the tree of life first? They would have been given the gift of life and sentenced to live forever, separated from God because of their sin. There would have been no hope for reconciliation.

That revelation gave me goosebumps. So, before Adam and Eve had the chance to make

their separation from God permanent, He acted. He banished them from the garden and, by doing so, He saved His creation.

Over the summer, I had a conversation with my ten-year-old who was confused about why God would create us in the first place if He knew we'd end up sinning. It was a short conversation, but I hope it was impactful. I told him God loves us. I asked him if he thought his dad and I would have ever chosen not to have him just because we knew that someday he would misbehave. The answer was a resounding, “No.”

We loved him before we ever met him. And I believe that our love, while powerful, pales in comparison to the love God has for each one of us.

God knew. Before the creation of the world, God knew what we would choose. And He was prepared with a solution in the form of a tiny babe, born in a stable, and laid in a manger.

As Christmas draws near and we get excited for Christmas carols, snow, festive decor, twinkly lights, Christmas trees, and the presents beneath them, let's celebrate the greatest gift ever given.

“And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” -Luke 2:12

At Riverside, we celebrate Jesus year-round. Every season here is special for its own reason, and winter is no exception. All winter long, Riverside's facilities are used for men's and women's retreats, youth retreats, marriage retreats, family reunions, holiday celebrations, and more. I believe God is reconciling people to Himself through these events here at Riverside.

We've heard stories of families growing closer, marriages being healed, youth surrendering their lives to Christ, and men and women being encouraged in their faith during difficult seasons of life. Without Jesus, none of this would be possible.

Thank you for your prayers, thank you for your support, and thank you for your dedication to Riverside. God is surely at work here. Keep reading to hear about how God was moving at Riverside throughout the autumn months. ■



Director's Advance

By Molly McGinn, Assistant Program Director

This year, our Executive Director, Darrie Nelson, Program Director, Lucero Olson, and Assistant Program Director, Molly McGinn, had the opportunity to go to the Christian Camp & Conference Association (CCCA) Fall Director's and Programmer's Advance hosted at The Woods camp in Fredonia, WI. This retreat invited Executive Directors and Programming staff from camps all over Wisconsin to gather together, connect, share wisdom, and learn about our specific roles in camp ministry.

The Advance consisted of sessions, group devotions, a tour of The Woods camp, tons of board games, and lots of fellowship time. I really enjoyed exploring another camp and "feeling like a camper again" as we hung out and took a relaxed approach to learning and connecting with each other.

The programming sessions were mainly geared toward getting to know one another and connecting, as well as giving us new ideas of games and activities that we could bring back to camp. Some of these activities included get-to-know-you-games, a mashup of telephone and Pictionary, and an Olympic style tournament.

As the Assistant Program Director, these sessions gave me lots of new ideas to bring back to Riverside, and I am excited to use some of them next summer! My favorite part of the whole experience was connecting with tons of other people who work in the same areas as I do. Being able to come together in our common faith and ministry and talk about the things happening at the different camps was really encouraging. Being new to this ministry, I found it extremely valuable to gain wisdom from the people who have been in the camping ministry much longer than I have, and to be able to bounce problems and ideas off of them. Everyone was extremely friendly and helpful, and the connections made will not only benefit us as individuals, but I believe having these people to continue to bounce ideas and problem solve with, will ultimately benefit Riverside as a whole.

This conference was the perfect example of what it means to be the Body of Christ and to support and uplift one another as we continue in ministry. I am excited to use everything we learned to help Riverside grow and can't wait for next year's Director's and Programmer's Advance! ■



Summer Family Camp

By Lucero Olson, Program Director

After our youth camps wrap up for the year, we welcome the whole family for Summer Family Camp and, later, Harvest Family Camp.

Eighteen families joined us for the weekend, and what fun we had! Every year, the families participate in a "family activity". Some years it's a relay race; some years it's a much more relaxed construction project. This year it was cardboard boat races! Each family was given a set amount of materials to construct a cardboard boat made to send one of their family members down the river. They worked on their boats throughout the weekend and on Saturday evening, we gathered to watch the boat race! Two boats were sent down at once. I was standing in the center of the river, toward the ballfield, to snap pictures. It was a joy to hear the whoops and cheers of the families as they ran down the path, watching their kids, or husbands/fathers, floating down the river. The determination in some of the kids' faces as they tried to paddle with their cardboard paddles was heartwarming. Although many of the boats did not survive the short trek down the river, it was such a fun activity to work on and "compete" together as a family.

Another highlight was on Sunday morning. Five young people made the decision to be baptized during the weekend while they were surrounded by family and friends. Chapel was held Sunday morning and then we all headed down to the river to be witnesses of these special proclamations. Each person shared his or her testimony before walking into the river with either their pastor or their parents to be baptized in the name of the Lord. This was such a special and moving time to witness. God was working in these young people's hearts, and to know that Riverside held such a special place with them that they would choose to take this step of faith here, was awesome to see.

We are thankful for such a great weekend with these families and can't wait for the privilege of sharing another weekend with them next year! ■

Fall Family Fun

By Molly McGinn, Assistant Program Director

This year's Harvest Family Camp was full of fall fun including pumpkin carving, paintball, hayrides, fellowship, and so much more. Campers got to enjoy the beauty of Riverside in the fall while falling deeper into the Word with Pastor Josh Nelson from Faith Community Church in Waupaca. Our theme for the past year has been "Draw Near", and that is exactly what Pastor Josh preached on. It was awesome to watch campers learn how to draw near to Christ as families and individuals during chapel sessions, as well as watch them laugh and play together throughout the weekend. The weather was pretty cold, especially after the seemingly prolonged summer we'd had, but that didn't stop campers from participating in all the fall activities planned for the weekend! Some braved the cold and played paintball or went for a hayride; others stayed inside and played games while they fellowshiped with one another; and some campers spent their time checking out the new Riverside frisbees in the camp store! No matter what people chose to do, smiling faces seemed to abound everywhere you looked.

On Saturday night, we had a Celebration Service where we looked back at the last year and all the ways God has used Riverside to impact lives! It was awesome to hear from staff about our summer programming and the campers, guests, and volunteers impacted because of our programs, facilities, and staff. We had the privilege to hear the testimony of Isabella Lathrop, one of the students who has served on RSI (Riverside Servanthood Institute) for the last several years. She talked about her experience as an RSier and encouraged anyone who can to serve. After looking back at the past year, we also got to look forward to what the future holds for Riverside. We looked at the plans and progress that has been made in the rebuilding of Zarephath and talked about the next steps for the building in the coming months. It is such a blessing to take time each year to look back at what the Lord has done and see His hand in the present and future of Riverside. It is also an encouragement as we look towards the coming year and all that is in store for Riverside and everyone who comes here. ■



Feelin' Crafty

by Lucero Olson, Program Director

Craft Camp is a special time for ladies to come and spend time with other women who love to craft and create. The weekend has a few programmed activities but is mostly free time for participants to make as much progress on their projects as possible. Everyone enjoyed wonderful cooking and baking from the volunteer cooks Rachel, Erich, and Carol which we hope was a blessing to the women who might often make much of their own meals at home. Some highlight dishes were: chicken poblano soup, chicken bacon ranch sliders, biscuits and gravy casserole,

and homemade chocolate chip pumpkin bread.

Participants also enjoyed an excursion to the thrift store at Amherst Bible Church on Saturday morning, where a number of treasures were found. Some crafts completed included painting signs and rocks, making plant arrangements, quilting, and many other projects. Some ladies also ventured into the nature of Riverside to forage. It was a relaxing weekend of good, creative fellowship amongst women. ■



Stewardship

Sustaining Riverside Financial Report Fiscal Year: May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Budget</u>
General Fund Income:	\$ 101,085	\$ 150,000
General Fund Expense:	\$ 128,656	\$ 150,000
Current Surplus/(Deficit): <small>as of Nov. 16th, 2023</small>	(\$27,571)	



"You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God."
2 Corinthians 9: 11-12

How to Give

- mail a check
- text "riverside" to 40101
- use MyWell giving app
- visit the "donate" tab on our website
- list Riverside in your Will or Estate Planning
- give equipment or property (gift-in-kind)
- volunteer

Be Content with God's Daily Provisions

by Mickey Kaufman, Director of Stewardship Ministries

Paul was sitting in jail towards the end of his life, and he was writing a letter of thanks to one of the churches. The Philippians had sent him a gift and he was responding. He thanked them and then he added, "...I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content...I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." He was content. What does contentment look like in your life? ■

What does God say?
Reflect on Proverbs 30:7-9, Phil. 4:11-20, I Tim. 6:6-10, Matt. 6:25-34



NEW ITEM

Looking for a gift for the Riverside-enthusiast in your life? Surprise them with one of our new RBC Frisbees! Featuring Riverside's iconic Rock of Ages, it perfectly captures the feel of camp life for you to enjoy year-round.

End-of-Year GIVING

Year after year, Riverside continues to be blessed by faithful donors who support the work being done here. Because of you, campers are never turned away due to financial concerns. Donating your time, talents, and finances to Riverside allow us to remain mission-minded year-round.

As the end of the year approaches, would you consider making a gift to Riverside? The impact of every gift is far-reaching and enables camp to continue to provide an environment where people can come to know, grow in, and share Jesus Christ.

If you would like your gift to be designated to a specific fund, please indicate that in the memo line. Building Zarephath, Scholarship Fund, or General Fund for use where needed most, are just a few of the areas where your gift could be designated.

Thank you for considering Riverside for your year-end gift!
Riverside is an IRS-approved recipient of tax-deductible IRA distributions

Did you know that you can receive the Riverside Reader by email? If you'd prefer that our quarterly newsletter be delivered to your inbox instead of your mailbox, let us know!

Lumberjack Day | Homecoming Camp

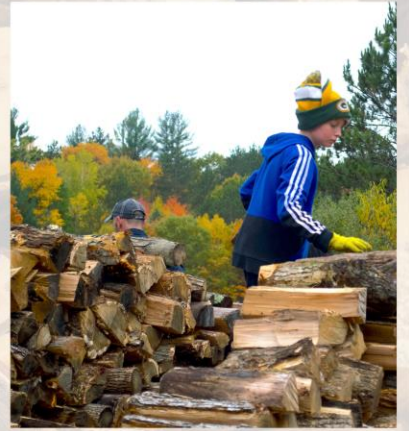
Lumberjack Day

by Elyse Erdahl, Administrative Assistant

The striking fall foliage provided a vibrant backdrop for the Lumberjack Day volunteers this year. Workers as young as 10 showed up to help prepare for the winter months. Splitting logs, loading trailers, and stacking row after row of firewood kept everyone busy throughout the day. So busy, in fact, they almost didn't notice the cooler temps! Almost... Thankfully, when lunch time arrived, everyone was able to take a break in the dining hall and warm up with delicious homemade soups, warm, flavor-filled sliders, sloppy joes, veggies, and tasty dessert bars. A well-deserved treat after a morning of hard work.

The Hebron Retreat Center is rented year-round, and guests get to enjoy the beauty of Riverside no matter the weather. In order to keep the building nice and toasty, Riverside relies on an outdoor, wood-burning furnace. This method drastically reduces the heating costs and allows Riverside to keep the renters' costs as affordable as possible. Since the Retreat Center is the destination of many youth retreats, marriage retreats, family reunions, and more throughout the winter, a lot of firewood is required! Thanks to the volunteers who donated their time and labor on Lumberjack Day, the wood burning furnace is fully stocked for the entire winter.

A simple "thank you" seems woefully insufficient for how grateful Riverside is for its volunteers. The camp is blessed by your service, and we hope to see you again for our next Lumberjack Day on October 19th, 2024! ■



Homecoming Camp

by Mickey Kaufman, Director of Stewardship Ministries

RBC Connections' 2023 Homecoming Camp was a great blessing! As we met together for 5 days in August, I was again amazed to learn of the work that God had done in so many lives over the years. Hearing the stories of decisions made, friendships established, and the ongoing impact of those youth camps and retreats - ten, thirty, even fifty years later - was such an encouragement - and an affirmation of how God has used Riverside over its nearly 90 years of ministry.

Our theme this year was "Friendship," and we had several wonderful speakers throughout the week who delivered powerful messages about what Godly friendship looks like. We spent the week living it out! Between the campfires, chapel sessions, shared meals, tubing down the river, and even taking a couple of pontoons out on the Chain O' Lakes in Waupaca, friendships were celebrated during this year's Homecoming Camp.

Plan to be part of next year's Homecoming Camp, August 5-11, and join in the joy of seeing old friends, making new friends, and being refreshed spiritually. We will share memories and learn from God's Word, all the while reconnecting with Riverside and the ministry here. Invite your Riverside friends and family members to join you here for a very special week. See you then. ■



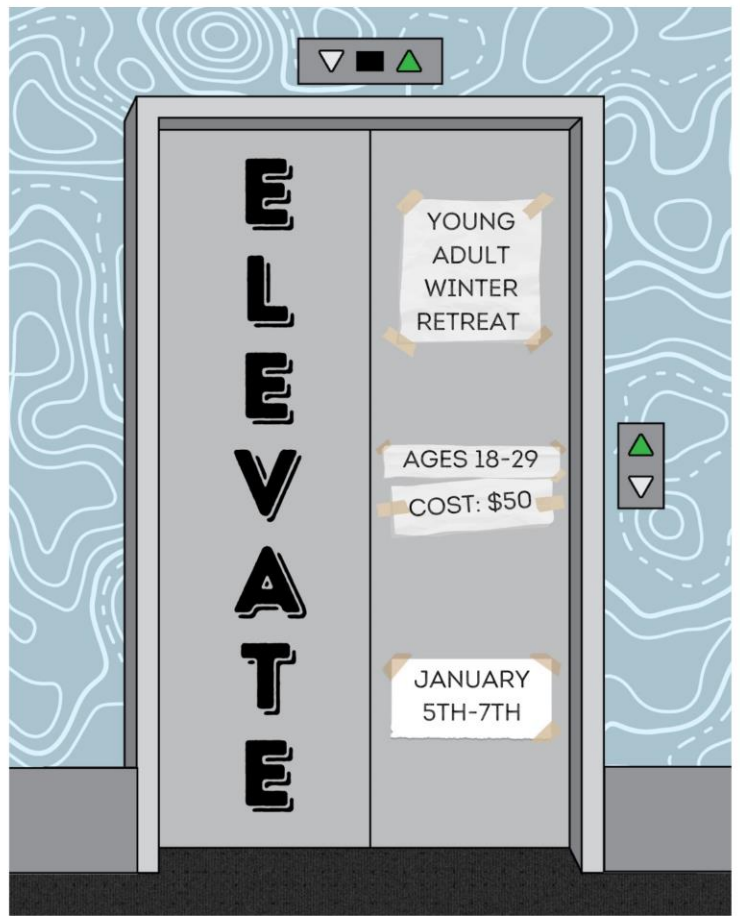
Upcoming Events



2024

Ring in the
NEW YEAR
With Riverside

Dec 31 | 6pm-12am

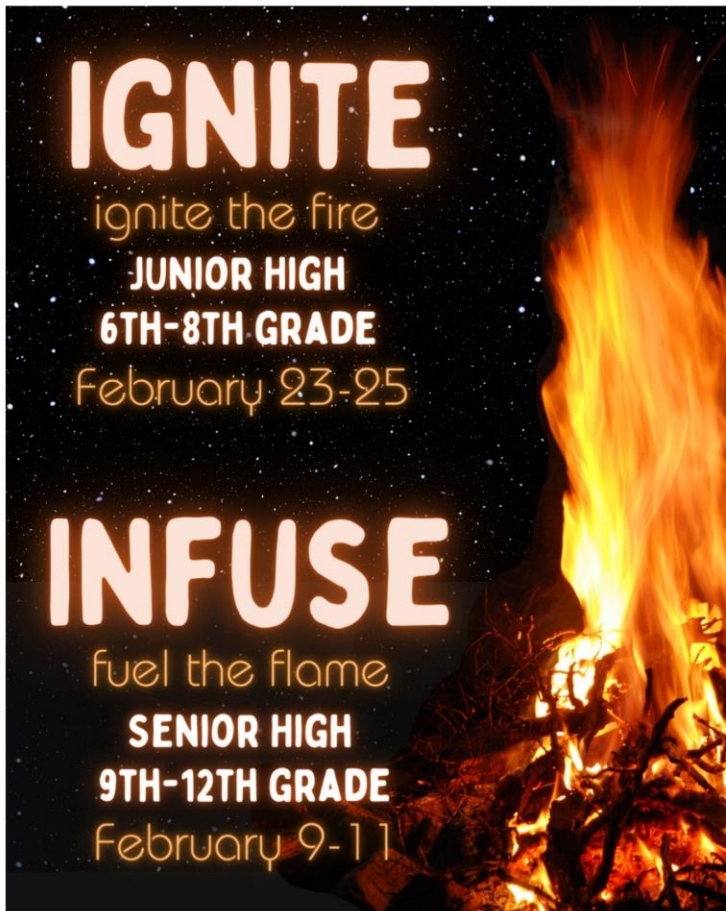


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YOUNG
ADULT
WINTER
RETREAT

AGES 18-29
COST: \$50

JANUARY
5TH-7TH



IGNITE
ignite the fire
JUNIOR HIGH
6TH-8TH GRADE
February 23-25

INFUSE
fuel the flame
SENIOR HIGH
9TH-12TH GRADE
February 9-11



Marriage Café

Feb 27 | Mar 26 | Apr 23

*Childcare provided

TOP 10 LIST

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

WANTED

1. Heavy Duty Fireplace Grate
2. 2-4 Seat UTV
3. Riding Lawn Mower
4. Air Hockey Table
5. Measuring Wheel
6. Wooden Bench Swings
7. White Copy Paper
8. Soccer Cones
9. Passenger Tire Tubes
10. 500-1000 gal LP Tanks

Calendar of Events | Most Wanted

2024 calendar

JANUARY
5-7 ELEVATE - Young Adult Retreat (18-29)
Mission to Haiti

FEBRUARY
9-11 INFUSE - Sr High Retreat
23-25 IGNITE - Jr High Retreat
27 Marriage Café

MARCH
26 Marriage Café

APRIL
20 Association Meeting
23 Marriage Café
27 Pioneer Women's Day

MAY
3-5 RSI Training
11 Work Day
25 Spring Open House

Looking for more information about one of our events?
Go to riversidebiblecamp.org/programs

If your staff pictures get interrupted by a cat, you might just work at Riverside.

Back Row: Molly McGinn, Scott Latzig, Maria Nelson, Janeé Kazda, David Kaufman, Annie Hulka, Lucero & Tessa Olson

Front Row: Darrie Nelson, Elyse Erdahl, Mickey Kaufman, Brian Hulka

Special Appearance by King the Cat



(d) Altogether, it takes just over 100 hours each year to keep the grounds free of debris. That's a lot of raking!



RSI Training Weekend | May 3-5, 2024

Mark your calendars! Riverside Servanthood Institute is our teen volunteer program. If your high school student would like to serve at Riverside this summer, then they must attend RSI Training Weekend. During the weekend, students will complete an application to serve, and receive training for the various roles and responsibilities they may have throughout the year. That's right, there are opportunities to serve all year long! Due to the flexibility of the program, students may choose to serve for as many or as few weeks of summer camp as they are able. Summer jobs and family vacations are still possible with the RSI program.

Don't wait, register today for RSI Training weekend at riversidebiblecamp.org/programs/rsi.

**Completion of application does not guarantee acceptance to the RSI program. Applicants are interviewed and applications carefully reviewed before an invitation to serve is extended. Students not accepted to the RSI program are encouraged to reapply in following years.*

2023 TESTIMONIAL



Isabella



"The weeks that I spend working at Riverside are by far the best weeks of my summer. From the little four- and five-year-olds attending VBS for the very first time, to the teenage RSlers who have been coming to camp for as long as they can remember, God works in and through them in mighty ways at Riverside. Serving at Riverside has really helped me to grow in my faith. The best job of an RSler, in my opinion, is working with the campers. The smallest little kids have taught me a great deal about what it means to be a Christian. Every camp I've served at, I have walked away desiring to become more like the children in my cabin or VBS group. Now, you might be thinking that spending your summer doing dishes or working on a farm does not sound like fun. But, I promise that your mind will be changed after just one day of being an RSler. And, after all, this isn't about you. It's about serving others. And serving is fun, if you have the right attitude about it!"



Being surrounded by such beautiful trees means Riverside has lots of raking to do each year. In order to keep the campus looking its best, how many hours do you think it takes to rake up the pine needles and leaves each year?

- a) 25-49 hours
- b) 50-74 hours
- c) 75-99 hours
- d) 100+ hours

Find the answer on the bottom of page 7!

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