

Ministry Reports

Adult Discipleship

Katrina Elliott, Adult Discipleship Director

This year was unlike any other I have experienced in the church. With the departure of Ralph, it has been a time of transition, to say the least. Even in the midst of transition, there are some loosely held expectations...each of which has been slowly pried out of our hands in the face of a global pandemic, leaving us completely at the mercy of God. Which, it turns out, is a really good place to be. As we look over the past year, it is important that we recognize and highlight God's faithfulness in spite of the trials.

- **Pods**

Riverside pods are groups of people who meet regularly with the purpose of helping each other follow Jesus (Up), share life with one another (In), and serve our community and world (Out). Some of the groups are men only or women only, where others are men and women together. Riverside pods meet either every week or twice a month, for the sake of consistency and building community.

Many of our pods focus their time on digging deeper into discussion around the sermon text and use the "Pod Talk" to guide their conversation. Some groups function more like a Bible Study and focus on a particular book of the Bible. We also have specialized pods, such as those oriented around marriage or parenting children with special needs.

Regardless of the focus, all pods are facilitated by a trained pod leader. The pod leaders meet once a month for support, training, and encouragement. It is a joy and pleasure to get to spend time with these committed leaders. In the midst of the transition between the fall and spring semesters, we experienced some attrition in our leaders. Those who carried on and those who stepped into leadership did an amazing job keeping things going as we faced the stay home order for the second half of the spring semester. The majority of pods continued meeting via Zoom or some other video conferencing platform. We are so thankful for these faithful leaders!

- **Men's and Women's Ministries**

The summer and fall 2019 events and retreats for men's and women's discipleship went off without a hitch, bringing brothers and sisters together through fun and fellowship...and food...there's always food. The men had a few breakfasts, as well as their annual carnivore night. The women had the ice cream social and the bingo night, as well as the fall retreat at Epworth Forest. We had the baptism service at the river and the fall barn party at Vintage Oaks. It's amazing how normal things felt then.

When the pandemic hit, the men's and women's discipleship teams had to make some tough calls to cancel events that we all look forward to, such as the men's retreat with ECC and the

women's progressive dinner. We have had to get creative about providing opportunities for connection when we had to be physically separate. We held Fellowship Zoom meetings after the virtual worship services, which were a great time for those who participated. The women did a Virtual Progressive Dinner via Zoom, which was a welcomed time of chats and laughs, as we all ate our own food in our own homes. Though many of us have longed for being able to gather in person, it's amazing what you can do virtually!

- **Ecuador**

We didn't go to Ecuador. It was a bummer. We had a team of 12 people signed up and ready to go, but we had to cancel the trip due to the travel restrictions, as well as the terrible state that Ecuador was in with the virus. Thankfully, we had not purchased our flights yet, so we didn't have to worry about the logistics of getting refunded.

We were able to have a reunion via Zoom with our brothers and sisters in Ecuador in June, with the help of our trusty translators from Merge. It was a sweet time to catch up with them and learn how we can be praying for them. We hope to have another of these meetings in the near future. We are currently working on putting together a care package of letters and photos from past trip participants to send to the church in Cangahua. Our prayer is that we are able to return in June 2021. If you've been thinking of joining us, jump in!

RiverKids

Megan Mills, Children's Ministry Director

This year has been full of ups and downs. VBS last summer was fantastic. It is always a sweet time of building relationships between kids and adults in our church. A glorious opportunity to press into the commitment the church makes to aid parents in the discipleship of their children. We were able to raise over \$250 to help El Buen Pastor in Ecuador put on VBS next year. Several Riverside kids who have been to Ecuador were able to share about their experiences, building ownership in our goal to raise money and partner with the Ecuador team. Last summer RiverKids on Sunday began to transition into a new format. A team of dedicated teachers came together to build and create a lesson that was compatible with the topic of the sermon each week. This allows for more ease of discussion between parent and child, more organic opportunities for discipleship throughout the week. This has been a desire of mine for a number of years. I am thankful for those who worked to make it happen.

This change also brought new roles. Each week one teacher worked to create and tell the Bible Lesson this freed up the classroom facilitators to focus less on content delivery and more on discipleship. Our desire was for classroom facilitators to use simple activities that reinforce the main idea of each lesson while the deepened and strengthened relationships. Before quarantine we were able to see those relationships strengthened.

This year brought many changes in leadership to Riverside this trickled down to RiverKids as well. Many volunteer changes, as people were unable to finish their commitments. Still many faithful volunteers showing up every week to love and guide these children.

Then March hit and we moved everything online. We found a Bible Story video series called, "God's Story". We have been using these every week to go along with the sermon text each week. Looking ahead things will continue to shift and change as we look to find ways to partner alongside parents in discipleship during this strange time of pandemic. I am acutely aware of the suffering many children are experiencing, feelings of frustration and isolation and am prayerfully seeking ways to love them from afar. I welcome ideas and suggestions, as well as sharing the struggles your kids are experiencing.

Worship

Mike Tetrault, Worship Director

The worship ministry has been faced with unprecedented challenges, but God has provided the right people, skills, and resources at the needed moments.

Last August, we had our baptism service at Fort Ouiatenon, and it was made possible by lots of volunteers who stepped into needed roles.

Sam Anderson was reinstated as a part-time employee last fall, and he was an invaluable member of the team over the past year. He took care of all visual elements during services along with various upkeep in the tech booth. He also played a central role in reconfiguring the booth and setting us up for online church services and livestreaming. Sam will be leaving us at the end of July as he goes to Traders Point Christian Church in Indianapolis for a residency in their production department.

The worship planning team had to put in extra time following Ralph's resignation to fill the gap prior to Corey's arrival. The team disbanded once Sunday sermons had been scheduled through to Corey's first Sunday.

When the pandemic hit in mid-March, we moved to pre-recorded online services at riverside.online.church. While this was a great way to find connection amidst the isolation of COVID, it was quite time-intensive and required Sam to increase his hours substantially to edit and compile the video. For Holy Week, we teamed up with ECC to create devotionals and worship services and music. While the process was difficult to coordinate, it was rewarding to show unity in our worship together. After Easter Sunday, I teamed up with Meghan Gobrogge, ECC's worship leader, to do music each week. This allowed each of our respective tech teams to have a week off as we alternated buildings.

While the music was a collaborative effort, our respective congregations handled all the speaking and sharing segments within worship. While this still poses its own organizational challenges, I am thankful for the technology that makes it possible.

At the end of June, we moved to livestreaming services instead of pre-recording. Of course, there are definitely different hurdles with livestreaming, but it has allowed us to enlist the help of more volunteers and spread the workload.

Also helpful in this process was that Riverside received a ConnectThroughTech Grant from the Center for Congregations. This grant disbursed a sum to Riverside to purchase equipment to help increase our production value and capabilities. So far, the funds have been used to purchase stage lighting and video processing, along with an enhanced video package from Vimeo.

Moving forward, we will be working to train new leaders in the tech booth to help facilitate the transition from Sam's work to a volunteer base. However, we are confident that God will provide what is needed to bring glory to His name in our community.

Youth

Mike Tetrault, Youth Discipleship Director

This past year has seen various challenges and successes in the youth ministry, and God has been faithful through it all.

Last July, the youth hiked on the Wilderness Trail, a week-long backpacking excursion in Virginia. While the walking was arduous at times, it was such a gift to spend time with students as we spent time with the Lord and with each other.

The Old Testament Journey concluded in late August, and there was a fast turnaround to start the New Testament. The Journey is the Evangelical Covenant Church's confirmation and discipleship curriculum. We then studied the New Testament throughout the school year, concluding in early May. We had some students join us mid-year, and even one student that was a remote participant for the entire year! Students had a chance to dive deeper into God's story, and I loved the questions that they would ask and the perspectives they brought to the text. Having finished the New Testament, we have a group of students who are ready to start Odyssey in the fall, seeking to apply what we learned in Journey. On the flip side, Journey will return to the Old Testament for this school year, and I invite any student in grades 7-9 to participate!

Over the course of the year, particularly before COVID-19 appeared, we had the chance to spend time together about each month as a youth group. In September, we took a joint field trip to Exploration Acres with the youth of ECC on the south side of Lafayette. In October, we hosted the annual fry bread booth at the Feast of the Hunters' Moon. Fry bread turned out to be great teambuilding and a great fundraiser at the same time! The weather was superb last year, so there were a lot of customers. In November, we worked together on some service projects on and beyond church grounds, including leaf removal, youth space renovation, and clearing leaves from Connie Wilcox's property. In December, we worked together to decorate

the building for the Christmas season, and we have gotten quite adept at this job over the years! Also in December, we spent one of our usual Sunday meetings hosting a study help session for students preparing for their final exams. I am thankful for the teachers and tutors in our congregation who make themselves available to serve students during finals season.

In January, we made our annual trek to Winter Camp, and we brought more students than ever before. But even more important than attendance were the conversations and connections that were made during that weekend, as students felt comfortable enough to share their hopes and struggles with one another. Oh, and for the first time our youth team took home the honor of being champions of the Stumpball Tournament.

In February, we went ice skating together, and that proved to be the final big activity prior to shut down for the pandemic. We had to cancel some beloved events, including 30 Hour Famine, our water station at the Camp Tecumseh 5K, and our first-ever summer service trip to Jesus People USA in Chicago. However, CHIC 2021 has been pushed back to 2022, so we will hopefully have a chance to be in Chicago for summer 2021.

With the pandemic, we were meeting on Zoom for our usual Sunday youth gatherings where we would discuss the sermon and other questions about life, along with games and catching up. We also added a midweek meeting option to have an extra point of connection. While it was a bit challenging to manage a large group of teenagers on a screen with games that somehow can work via Zoom, it was an excellent way to keep in contact and process what was happening.

After the stay-at-home order ended, the youth group has moved to in-person meetings. On Wednesdays we go for walks outside, and this will continue until school resumes. On Sundays we meet at the Moeschberger barn, where are able to keep our distance outside as we discuss the sermon and enjoy some fellowship. For safety, and to have an added layer of protection in case we cannot perfectly maintain our distance, we have abided by a masks-required policy so we can gather as safely as possible.

Going into the next school year, I am excited to have a new group of students doing the Old Testament Journey, as well as our Journey graduates who will be in our inaugural Odyssey group.

We still have an incredible group of youth leaders who are continually investing and checking in with our students. Wendy Parsak, Amanda Braun, and Fizz Olsen have been instrumental in our youth ministry this year. Michael Lazzarini was a crucial team member as well, but he is transitioning to prepare for student teaching in Zionsville.

Transitional Ministry Summary

Riverside Covenant Church, West Lafayette, IN

Rev. Dr. Corey W. Johnsrud

Initial Observations

Riverside Covenant Church is a congregation that through a series of events and transitions has lost its sense of shared mission. This loss was almost immediately apparent to me in my initial conversations with the Leadership Team and was confirmed in the numerous listening appointments I have had with members of the Leadership Team, Staff and Congregation since arriving in March. There are a number of factors that led to this loss and while there is some disagreement to the degree of this loss of Mission/Vision, it is clear that there is most certainly not a widely held understanding of Riverside's Mission as a congregation.¹

In my conversations with congregants, including Staff, Leadership Team and Lay Members, there was not a consistent statement referred to as a touchstone for mission. There were similarities in thoughts about who Riverside is, but not a succinct, clear statement of who Riverside is and where it is going. It is my opinion that the Mission and Vision of Riverside was so completely embodied in the ministry of Pastor Dan, that it was not effectively communicated to and owned by the congregation. This resulted in its loss with his departure. Additionally, there is a need for organizations to periodically revisit and refresh their understanding of their mission and this process is overdue at Riverside. Further, the calling of Pastor Ralph without completing the search process, allowed this loss of Mission Clarity to be overlooked in that process and contributed significantly to the brevity of his tenure as Lead Pastor.

Leadership Issues

This season of missional drift is one factor that has led to a loss of trust in the leadership of the Leadership Team. In addition, some of the distrust is a result of a lack of role clarity for both the Leadership Team and the Staff. The Leadership Team has inserted itself into areas of staff management and oversight, that according to the Constitution and By-Laws, are not part of their role. This has led staff to feel disempowered and unable to exercise appropriate leadership in their given ministry areas. Thirdly, the handling and treatment of Pastor Ralph's ministry and his subsequent departure has also caused a general distrust of the Leadership Team throughout the congregation and staff.

There is also a general mistrust which is the result of poor communication practices on the part of the whole congregation. Unhealthy communication practices have become normative for some and these practices have resulted in mistrust in the congregation as a whole. The Congregation, Staff and Leadership must work to re-establish trust and to change the communication culture of the congregation. This includes, but is not limited to the development of direct and healthy practices of communication.

¹ (For the purposes of our discussion, I define Mission as the guiding direction of the organization and vision as the current plan to move the organization in that direction.)

Focus Points of Transitional Season

I believe there are three priorities which must be addressed in this transitional season to best position Riverside for the future. These three priorities are: Trust and Communication, Mission Clarity, and Ministry and Budget alignment. I see a lot of potential at Riverside. There is a wealth of relational capital and an abundance of love for one another, that if accessed will propel Riverside into a bright future.

Trust and Communication

The first is to attend to the unhealthy culture of communication that has taken root in the congregation. I have dealt with the topic already in a sermon and it will be a continued focus during my tenure as Transitional Pastor. The recognition of this issue led me to introduce to the Staff and the Leadership Team the concept and practice of a Communication Covenant. The Leadership Team and Staff will meet to finalize and approve this document, which will then be shared with the congregation as the standard for communication moving forward. This initial step will be completed by the end of August. This document will provide the framework for how difficult conversations and communication will be handled moving forward.

This will be an important initial step for the repair of trust between the Leadership Team, Staff and Congregation. Obviously, the practice of this new style of healthy communication will take time and will require grace and patience on the part of everyone. In addition, the Leadership Team may need to take further steps to address other issues of trust and the repair of relationships where possible. This repair of trust is vital to the success of future ministry at Riverside.

Mission Clarity

In order for Riverside to be optimally positioned for their next Lead Pastor, Mission clarity must be achieved. This process will require a multi-faceted approach and will take time (6-8 months). It should be noted that this mission clarification work directly intersects with the work that will be required of the Search Team. I recommend the following steps to begin this vital process:

1. The formation of a Mission Team with broad representation from the congregation and cross representation to the Search Team.
2. Several Mission Conversations seeking to engage the whole congregation and answer the following questions:
 - A. Who is Riverside now?
 - B. Who is Riverside's neighbor?
 - C. Who is God calling Riverside to be?
3. The development and adoption of a succinct, memorable and inspirational Mission Statement.
4. The reaffirmation of Riverside's values. (aka The Covenant Affirmations)

5. Once further mission clarity is achieved there will need to be work done around role clarity for Staff and Leadership Team. This will require both a revision of Job Descriptions and functions for staff that align with current mission statement. Leadership Team functions as expressed in the Constitution and By-laws will need to be revised accordingly in alignment with mission. The role of the Leadership team should be policy driven, not oversight of particular ministries.

I further recommend that development of a vision statement be held until the call of a permanent lead pastor.

Ministry and Budget Alignment

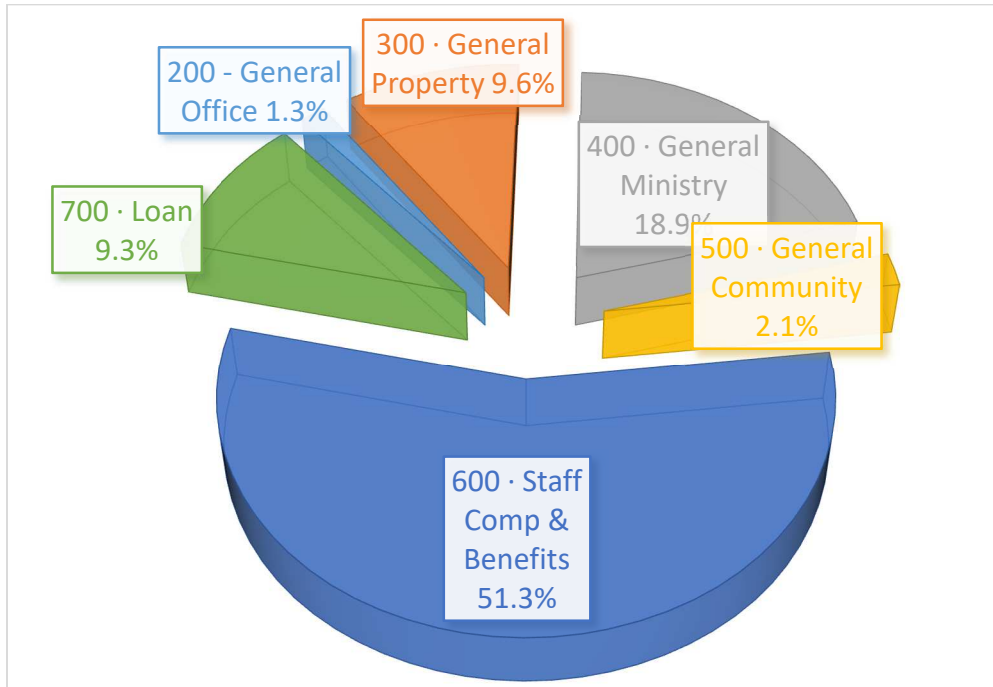
Once mission clarity is achieved, a full ministry audit is recommended. All ministries of Riverside would be evaluated from the perspective of whether or not they move Riverside forward in their stated mission. If not, then the ministry would be discontinued. This would include an assessment of current staffing alignment with approved Mission Statement and goals.

Proposed Budget 2020-2021

Kevin Jones, Treasurer

2020-2021			
Income	Budget	Actual	% Change
100 · General Fund Income	\$ 565,900		-1.4%
150 · Rental Income	\$ 2,150		7.5%
Total Income	\$ 568,050	\$ -	-4.7%
Expense	Budget	Actual	% Change
200 - General Office	\$ 7,650		0.0%
300 · General Property	\$ 54,640		-35.5%
400 · General Ministry	\$ 107,260		-12.4%
500 · General Community	\$ 11,800		-45.8%
600 · Staff Comp & Benefits	\$ 291,161		3.8%
700 · Loan	\$ 52,900		-10.2%
Total Expense	\$ 525,410	\$ -	-8.8%
Net Income	\$ 42,640	\$ -	

2019-2020	
\$	573,700
\$	2,000
\$	596,200
Budget	
\$	7,650
\$	84,665
\$	122,412
\$	21,790
\$	280,479
\$	58,900
\$	575,896



Income	2019-20 Budget	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Budget	% Change
	\$	\$	\$	
100 · General Fund Income	573,700	460,041	565,900	-1.4%
	\$	\$	\$	
150 · Rental Income	2,000	2,340	2,150	7.5%
	\$	\$	\$	
Total Income	575,700	462,381	568,050	-1.3%
Expense	2019-20 Budget	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Budget	% Change
	\$	\$	\$	
200 - General Office	7,650	7,615	7,650	0.0%
	\$	\$	\$	
300 · General Property	84,665	50,484	54,640	-35.5%
	\$	\$	\$	
400 · General Ministry	122,412	87,809	107,260	-12.4%
	\$	\$	\$	
500 · General Community	21,790	12,623	11,800	-45.8%
	\$	\$	\$	
600 · Staff Comp & Benefits	280,479	243,854	291,161	3.8%
	\$	\$	\$	
700 · Loan	58,900	52,388	52,900	-10.2%
	\$	\$	\$	
Total Expense	575,896	454,773	525,410	-8.8%
	\$	\$	\$	
Net Income	(196)	7,608	42,640	