



Inside this issue:

Worship Series,	2
Birthdays	
Small Groups	3
Youth	4
Children	5
Women's Ministry, Kits for Conference	6
Missions	7
Summer Worship	8
Open Arms Christian Preschool	

**May/June Upper
Room Devotionals
are available in the
Narthex, the History
Corner, and the
Welcome Center.**

**THE UPPER
ROOM**
DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Reflections of a Year in Ministry

I remember vividly the Alex from a year ago, walking across the magnificent stage of Duke Chapel, receiving my Master of Divinity degree with a smile stretching from ear to ear. Armed with three years of theological training and spiritual growth like never before, I was ready to barge through the sanctuary doors of every church in the world to bring about change and inspire hope. I pictured myself as the table-flipping Jesus in the temple courts, creating holy chaos wherever I walked. I felt enlightened, and I was eager to share everything I had learned during my time as a student. Looking back now, I can't help but grin at my former self's innocent optimism.

A year in ministry is nothing to boast about. One can say that it equates to but a drop in a vast ocean of experience. But this past year in ministry here at River Road UMC has opened my eyes to the realization that ministry is so much more than regurgitating three years of theological knowledge onto the congregation. It is more than innovative changes in church programming. And it is definitely not trying to get people to see things the way I do. Contrastingly, I have learned that ministry, at its heart, is about seeing – seeing people where they are and letting them know they are seen. It was only after a few months of doing ministry here that I made sense of what our graduation commencement speaker meant when she told us that all of our academic achievements, the countless pages of essays, and even our degrees would be all for naught if we do not have love in our hearts.

We are all vessels made to be filled with love of our God. Our identities are rooted in our oneness with Christ, and sometimes we need to be reminded of that as we stumble through life. We worship a Lord who knows us fully and deeply, thus the community of the church must become holy ground in which every person feels seen, known, and loved – both fully and deeply. River Road UMC has reminded me that at the most fundamental level, ministry is about loving people who they are wherever they are. This realization did not come to me through some divine eureka moment. Rather, it came to me because I experienced firsthand the radical hospitality of RRUMC that loved me for who I was as soon I walked through the doors every day. The progression of welcome comprised of two steps: 1. "You are here", 2. "And so, we love you." This is the call of the church.

As I transition out of this church, I cannot leave without saying thank you. Thank you for the way you welcomed me. Thank you for teaching me more than I could ever teach you. Thank you for loving me just as I am. I challenge you to continue to live into the church tagline, "loving people to life." Continue to welcome everyone who walks through the doors with open arms and an even more open heart. There is no shortage on God's love; there is an endless supply. I hope and pray that River Road UMC will be sacred ground where God's endless flow of love pours like a mighty waterfall upon all who walk near it.

Grace and peace,
Alex Lee

Worship Series: Spirit Life

- | | | |
|----------------|---|------------------------------|
| June 9 | Spirit Life: Pentecost & Confirmation Sunday | Acts 2 |
| | One service today at 10:30 am | |
| June 16 | Spirit Life: Faith's Memory | John 14 |
| June 23 | Spirit Life: Giver of Gifts | 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 |
| June 30 | Spirit Life: God's Indwelling | 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 |



June Birthdays

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <u>June 1</u>
Lydia Taylor
Kate Meilink
Laura Rothenberg | <u>June 2</u>
Stephen Hayes | <u>June 3</u>
Peggy Barr | <u>June 4</u>
Susan Simmers | <u>June 7</u>
Grover Barrett
Mallory McCall |
| <u>June 8</u>
Corey King
Brock Benton | <u>June 10</u>
Chuck Irwin
Vicki Keith | <u>June 11</u>
Mercedes Castro | <u>June 13</u>
Mark Allred
John Vaughan, Jr. | <u>June 14</u>
Jamie Breeden |
| <u>June 15</u>
Jennifer Franklin
Ava Messer | <u>June 17</u>
Roxane Gilmore | <u>June 18</u>
Alicia Moosally | <u>June 19</u>
Dick Boaz
Caroline Vines | <u>June 20</u>
Jeni Benson |
| <u>June 23</u>
Tom Latta
Michael Wriston
Catherine Dameron | <u>June 24</u>
Dave Short | <u>June 25</u>
John Benton III
Emma Barrett
Brian Buckley | <u>June 26</u>
Brandon Smith
Grace Quagliano
Claire Stuckey | <u>June 27</u>
Jeff Eastman |





SUNDAY MORNING 9:30



(Room 211) Good News

(Room 202) Contemporary Christian

(Room 106) Preschool (3 years & fully potty trained until they start kindergarten)

(Room 109) Early Elementary (K-2nd grade)

(Room 105) Older Elementary (3rd-5th grade)

(Youth Basement) Youth (6th-12th grade)

Early in May the world lost one of the most profound and soft-spoken witnesses to the love and kindness of God. Jean Vanier was born to a prominent Canadian civil servant. He remembered fleeing France where his father was stationed at the beginning of World War II. In 1942, at the tender age of 13, he decided he needed to join the British Royal Navy and made the dangerous journey through the U Boat infested north Atlantic to study at the Royal Naval College in England, serving in the Navy until 1950. A French Canadian, he pursued his studies in France. While in France he became friends with Thomas Philippe, a Catholic priest. Father Thomas was concerned for the welfare of the thousands of people institutionalized in France because of intellectual disabilities. Sensing a calling, Vanier came to know two such men, Rafael and Philippe, and opened his home to them where they lived as a family, sharing and receiving each other's gifts.

This led to the foundation of L'Arche, an international network of communities where those with intellectual disabilities live with their caregivers in a family setting where everyone in the community becomes more fully human because of the love they give and receive from one another. For over 50 years Vanier spent his time with those who are invisible to so many, with those whose condition represents our worst fears. In spending his life with such people, Vanier came to see the profound simplicity of Christian discipleship. The most important question we have is, "Do you love me? Do you love me just as I am?" And perhaps the second most important question is, "How do I lose power?" According to Vanier we want wealth and power because we believe it will help us avoid our own suffering and the suffering of others. But the trajectory of Jesus is one of the loss of power – becoming as a slave, washing feet, submitting to death instead of using power to harm others. Vanier has this simple definition of spirituality: seeking out those who are rejected and invisible and building community with them.

As we strive to be a church that loves people to life, that builds a community committed to loving God and neighbor, I hope we can learn from the profound simplicity of Jean Vanier. Who are the invisible and rejected people God is calling us to love? How do we meet them not from a position of power, but out of a desire to share our gifts and to receive theirs? How do we connect with them in such a way that helps them experience the truth that we love them, that God loves them, just as they are right now?

There are a number of Youtube videos of Jean Vanier. I've found myself listening to them in the evening as I'm winding down. His kindly presence and profound gentleness are good things for me to take in as I seek a peaceful night's rest. May his gentleness and simplicity remind us of Christ at work in us and through us.

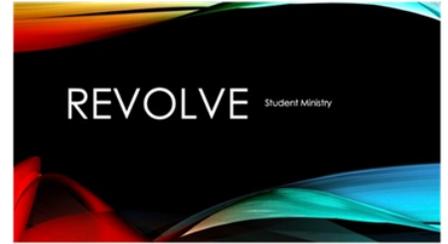
In Christ's Service,
Ed

Community Bible Study will start September 10th at 7 pm. We meet on Tuesday nights at RRUMC and will be studying Romans. Please contact Kathy Short at 804-337-1989 or khshort1@gmail.com for more information.

Alex Lee Contact Information:

Phone: (919) 623-6405

Email: youth@riverroadumc.org



Looking back at May:



Jack Stuckey and Emma Benson were the winners of our most recent raffle! Youth receive raffle tickets for showing up and participating in our games! The prizes this week were a shoulder massager and a Dick's Sporting Goods gift card!

The calm before the storm during our callback game to Assault on American Gladiators! It was a blast watching nerf bullets flying everywhere!

Mark your calendars! Here is what's coming up for our youth!

SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH June 2nd and 9th @ 5:00pm – 7:00pm – Come join us for dinner, games, and a time of discipleship!

FINAL CONFIRMATION CLASS June 2nd @ 3:45pm – 5:00pm – Class meets for our final lesson!

June 9th Confirmation, Combined Service @ 10:30am – We have a special joint worship on Pentecost Sunday to celebrate the confirmation of our fellow youth members! Please come out to celebrate and support the faith journeys of our beloved brothers and sister in Christ!

SUMMER YOUTH SCHEDULE BEGINS JUNE 10th – Our final Sunday night youth will be June 9th! After that, we will switch over to our summer schedule where we take a break from Sunday evening programs. Instead, we will have various activities planned throughout the summer so keep your eyes peeled!

June 17-21 - VBS: WE NEED YOUR HELP! – VBS is early this year and we need all the help we can get! We are especially hoping for many youth volunteers this year to fill up the marketplace and help lead groups around their stations. Please contact Alex Lee or Danielle Rinker to volunteer or ask further questions!

June 26th - First Summer Activity! – We will have our first summer activity on Wednesday, June 26th! Please be on the lookout for more details in the coming weeks.

Grace and peace,
Alex Lee

Save the Date:

• **VBS - June 17th-21st**

Volunteers are needed each night to help with dinner and help the children with crafts in the marketplace.



Nursery

Professionally-staffed Nursery is offered in room for infants, toddlers and preschoolers for all three service times (8:30, 9:30, 11:00) and Sunday evenings (September - June 2019) from 5-7 pm.

Sunday School Classes

Preschool-potty trained 3, 4 and 5-year-olds

9:30 am in room 108. Led by Penny Condrey, Tracy Wood, Carrie Francisco, Meg Walunas, Meg Eastman, Alana Ritenour, Alicia Moosally, and Elizabeth Buchholz.

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

9:30 am in room 107. Led by Jaimey Honea, Lara Malbon, Kim Cosby, and Megan Gilliland.

3rd-5th Grade

9:30 am in room 109. Led by John Honea & Robin Ely.

YOUR CHILDREN ARE WELCOME AT ALL OUR WORSHIP SERVICES! Please attend worship with your children, grandchildren, and guests! Worship attendance is very important, even at a young age, for spiritual development. We are ALL created for worship! Worship bags, Storybook Bibles, and activity binders are available at all three services.

If you feel like you need somewhere quieter to worship during the 11 am service, the Cuddle Room is available in the back of the sanctuary with a live feed of the service and activities for your child. Please see an usher if you have any trouble finding these things.

Important Dates

M+M will be back September 8th

Dinner is served from 5-5:30pm. From 5:30-6:15 K-2 will be in the choir room with Joy Price. 3-5 will be in room 109 for missions with Danielle Rinker. At 6:15 K-2 will come down to missions and 3-5 will finish up the night in the choir room.

5 and under are always welcome in the nursery.





Women's Prayer Breakfast – June 13

The monthly Women's Prayer Breakfast will meet at 8:30 on Thursday, June 13, at River City Diner, 11430 W. Huguenot Road, Midlothian 23113. No reservation needed—just come on out and join the group—bring a friend.

Frances Allen/Alice Weed Circle – No Meeting Until September

The Frances Allen/Alice Weed Circle, led by Pearcy Flippen and Jane Bren, does not meet during the summer months. The next meeting will be September 10, 10:00 AM, Activity Room. All women are welcome.

Book Club Starting - June 24

A new book club is starting in June. It will meet the 4th Monday evening of each month.

Details for June's meeting are:

Hostess: Ann York
 Location: Ann's home, 2800 Chancel Lane, Henrico 23233
 Date: June 24 (Monday)
 Time: 7:00 PM
 Book Title: *Where the Crawdads Sing*, by Delia Owens
 Available at the library and Costco

UMCOR Kits for Conference, Now through June 16

Make a Hygiene Kit!

One hand towel (15 x 25 or 17 x 27 inches, no kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels)
 One washcloth (no kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels)
 One comb (sturdy with at least 6 inches of teeth; no picks)
 One toenail or fingernail clipper
 Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger, in package; no Ivory or Jergen's)
 One adult toothbrush (in package, no personal advertising)
 10 adhesive bandages (3/4 by 3 inches)
 One one-gallon size re-sealable bag

Lay hand towel flat

Lay the washcloth in the center of the hand towel.

Place all remaining items on top of the washcloth.

Fold the sides of the hand towel to cover the items.

Grasp the bundle tightly and roll over the remainder of the towel.

Place the tightly rolled bundle in the plastic bag, remove air, seal.

Make a School Kit!

One pair blunt scissors (round tips only, no plastic)
 One box of 24 crayons (24 only)
 Three one-subject notebooks (not marble; one subject only)
 One pack of loose-leaf paper (100-200 sheets)
 One hand-held pencil sharpener (at least 1"; remove packaging)
 One 12" ruler
 Six unsharpened pencils
 One eraser (2" inches or larger)
 One two-gallon re-sealable plastic bag (2 gallon bags can be found at Walmart)

1. Stack all paper items on top of each other.
2. Place all loose items on top of paper.
3. Place kit inside re-sealable bag and seal.

Monetary donations are appreciated too! Checks should be made to River Road UMC with the memo "UMCOR Relief". Place in offering plate. Kits are due Sunday June 16th. See our Welcome Center display for more info OR contact Karen Carter at ontheperch@gmail.com OR 347-2440.

UMCOR Kits for Conference, Now through June 16

Every year, United Methodist pastors bring UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) kits, assembled by their congregation, to the Virginia Annual Conference. The kits are distributed all over the world to help sustain people when a disaster strikes. Let's send off Pastor Darcey with as many kits as possible. (See previous page for kit details.)

Pray for our Mission Trip to Florida July 21-27

RRUMC will help rebuild homes in the St. Pete/Clearwater/Tampa Bay area destroyed by Hurricane Irma in 2017 -- the families have been waiting for help for 2 years. 12-14 people from our congregation are going. A BIG shout out to Jim Banta for his superb planning and leadership. Please hold them all in your prayers. Email Jim Banta at jamesbantacorp@gmail.com if you have questions.

Micah Initiative

As the school year winds down, be in prayer about volunteering at Oak Grove-Bellemeade Elementary School for school year 2019-2020. There are so many ways to help and we organize carpools.

To learn more, contact Mary York at tmews.york@verizon.net



Ginter Park UMC Food Pantry and Clothes Closet Update

Our partnership with GPUMC is going strong. Every Wednesday, about 10 people from our congregation volunteer from 9-noon. We currently need more help on the 2nd Wednesday of every month to unload the Feedmore truck of heavy produce and other foods, and we need another person to help the online check-in of participants. Other volunteers always welcome! Keep the food donations coming! Thank you Karen Carter for creating a prayer request card so the two congregations can pray for the specific needs of those who come for food. She is also providing them daily scripture. To volunteer or get details, contact Tony Barnette at tony.jean@verizon.net.



Rise Against Hunger

150 people helped pack 25,000 highly nutritious meals on Sunday, May 19.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and for all the great help unloading the truck, setting up, serving breakfast and lunch, and helping with clean up. Thank you especially to John McLarin for organizing the huge event. Our next RAH event will be the Sunday after Easter, April 19, 2020. We are thankful for RAH that makes it possible for River Road to serve God in the world.

Thanks be to God for the work he gives us to do together. If you want to be a part of our missions projects or have any questions, contact ellenreaves@verizon.net or 804 229 4277.



**RIVER ROAD
UNITED METHODIST**
LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

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Preschool: 754-0227

June 2019

**Articles for the
July 2019
Connections are due
June 21, 2019.**



We're on the web at
www.riverroadumc.org

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Beginning July 7 through August 25

9:00 am - Sunday School

9:00 am - Contemporary Worship in the Fellowship Hall

Children's Sunday School during the 9:00 am service.

10:30 am - Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

Children's Church during the 10:30 service



Open Arms Christian Preschool



May was a busy month of celebrations for us at Open Arms Christian Preschool! We celebrated our teachers the week of May 6th during teacher appreciation week! We are all so very grateful to be blessed with a loving and caring group of ladies that teach our children every day! On May 10th our Mothers were celebrated at a Mother's Day tea. They were showered with gifts their children made and some

sweet treats! Our graduating Pre-Kindergarten and Jr. Kindergarten group were celebrated at a graduation performance on May 24th! What a joy and pleasure we've had teaching all these young disciples this year. We pray they continue to seek joy and spread love throughout the world. Also on Friday, May 24th we celebrated the end of our school year with a school wide picnic. It was a fun time had by all with great food and fun (bouncy house)!

We can't wait to kick off our summer camp program in June and we're already gearing up for our 2019-2020 Preschool program! If you or anyone you know would like more information on our program, please have them contact the Preschool Director, Nora Hamlet, at 754-0027 or visit our website at www.openarmschristianpreschool.org.

