RIVER ROAD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
loving people to life

Connections

July 2019

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July/August Upper Room Devotionals are available in the Narthex, the History Corner, and the Welcome Center.

THE UPPER ROOM
DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

A Hope That Does Not Disappoint

I am currently reading a book by the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin entitled Leadership in Turbulent Times. The book was recommended to me through a United Methodist clergy leadership program, with the aim of learning practical gems as we face our own turbulent times that inevitably come into every leader's life.

The book features four U.S. presidents—Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson. The book names the leadership strengths that they came into the world with through the lens of their upbringing and pivotal life circumstances that shaped their leadership. Kearns then goes on to chart how each of these men brought these strengths to bear during a tumultuous time in American history.

Abraham Lincoln navigated the country during the lead up to and through the American Civil War. Theodore Roosevelt led during the voracious iniquities of the industrial revolution as well as the country's entrance into the First World War. Franklin D. Roosevelt guided America through a time of great economic uncertainty in the Great Depression, as well as into the Second World War. Lyndon B. Johnson led in the aftermath of an assassination and during the Civil Rights Movement.

It was interesting that while the men varied widely in their upbringing and backgrounds, interests and temperaments, there were some things that they held in common that fitted them for effective leadership.

The most notable was this: all of them had some personal and or public struggle they had to face. They all had an experience or experiences that humbled or shook them to the core.

Abraham Lincoln was born into poverty. When Lincoln was nine years old his mother died and shortly thereafter his father headed for Kentucky to find a new wife and left Lincoln with his 12 year old sister alone for seven months. At ten or eleven, Lincoln's education ended and he would "scour the countryside to find books to educate himself." When Lincoln was an adult, he struggled with "melancholy", what we now call depression. There was one bout when he was 32 years old that left him in bed for days. His friends, fearful for his safety, removed razors and knives from his apartment.

Theodore Roosevelt, although born into wealth and privilege, suffered tremendous loss in his adult life. Most notably, he lost his beloved wife in childbirth and his mother to typhoid fever within 24 hours of each other.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, at the age of 39 and used to independence and robust physical health, was stricken with the polio virus that left him paralyzed for life.

As a young man, Lyndon B. Johnson came face to face with people living in poverty and lacking opportunities when he taught at a school along the border in Texas. Johnson ran for the Senate in 1941 and when he lost he took it as a severe blow to his self worth that sent him into a miserable and protracted depression.

Later in life each of these men would point to these times of intense struggle and suffering instead of times of success as the time when their endurance, character, and indeed hope was forged.

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Worship Series: Spirit Life

July 7 **Spirit Life: Holy Spirit Produce Department**

July 14 **Spirit Life: Raising the Conscience and Setting Us Free**

July 21 **Spirit Life: You, Yes You, God Needs You!**

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While reading of the struggles they faced, I kept thinking of this passage from Romans 5:3-5:

> 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering
> produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character
> produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been
> poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

It reminded me that as believers we have a particular way of understanding suffering—however it presents itself into our lives. Struggle may be an internal suffering of anxiety or depression, or an external struggle such as a loss of deep grief, or a threat to our physical health. However the suffering comes, we have a means by which to understand and seek God's fortification.

Through God, we do not need to fear suffering, nor do we need to become defined by our suffering. Our status as a child of God is what defines us. Sufferings in fact can be ways that we practice endurance, where we are formed in our character, and through which we can become hopeful rather than bitter and disappointed as though life has cheated us. How? Because God's love poured into us through the Holy Spirit is at work in us to redeem even our sufferings and the systems that contribute to human suffering.

It doesn't mean we have to like our sufferings –the biblical invitation is to trust that God is doing something even through them, within us, for others.

Goodwin postulates that these men would not have been able to lead the nation with wisdom, passion, perseverance, humility, and hope had they not personally experienced suffering. Lincoln could not have navigated the nation and helped to end slavery without his own plunge into darkness.

Johnson could not have continued the march to equal rights without seeing how people in poverty actually lived, and having to face his own demons of self worth tied to achievement and success.

This my brothers and sisters in Christ is profoundly good news today—that whatever suffering you may face God is redeeming even that, maybe particularly that, to fortify you to serve and understand others. It does not mean God caused the situation, put the order in just so you could become wise, or served it up so that you would join a cause. Rather in this fallen world and the suffering that does come, Christ's love poured into us is greater, and working to use these experiences to transform us into people of hope and faithful tenacity. Christ's love can use those experiences to help us become more people who work for justice to lessen the sufferings of others.

Perhaps suffering in some form is on your life's radar right now. If so, may you know that whatever you face, the love of God is being poured into your heart to continually save you from fear, bitterness, and resentment and instead to lead you into perseverance, character, and a hope that does not disappoint. Amen.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Darcey

SMALL GROUPS

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)

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.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL LIFE MINISTER

This weekend I tagged along with my wife as she went to a conference in D.C. We took the train up, because who wants to pay to park or have to drive in our nation's capitol? On the train I was reminded of a story I heard. A woman was rushing to make her train and forgot the copy of the electronic ticket she printed. What's more, she could not find the electronic ticket on her phone and was panicking as the conductor made his way up the aisle to her to check her ticket. When he got to her, she was embarrassed and apologetic. The conductor sat across from her and asked her about her travel plans to get a read as to whether she was a harried traveler or a stowaway, but the conversation shifted – she mentioned her children, he talked about his, they chitchatted about places they had both been to, and after ten minutes or so the conductor got up to go back to work. The woman thanked him for understanding, and he replied, "No, thank you – its nice to be seen."

Hundreds of people each day laid eyes on this conductor as he scanned their ticket or helped them with luggage, but none of them saw him as a person. They interacted with him in the same way they would interact with a self-checkout station at the grocery store. Andrew Root is a professor of youth ministry and he has spent a lot of time researching the history of ministry and the roots of our contemporary culture. He says a lot of our ministry is spent trying to create a vital faith, a committed faith, which is capable of extending the religious sphere into the a-religious or anti-religious world. But faith is not about a turf war. It's about personal encounter, where we meet the humanity of Jesus in the humanity of each other. It's about creating a community where everyone is seen.

So much of Jesus' ministry was spent seeing people many others saw more as fixtures than as human beings. Are we able to see the grieving person beyond the brave face they feel compelled to wear? Are we able to see the weariness in the young family that is balancing so much? Are we able to see the resolve and hope in someone experiencing illness? As we move to our summer schedule on July 7, we have more opportunity to cross paths with people on Sunday morning, to truly see each other. If you come to the 9am service this summer, consider staying an extra fifteen minutes after worship to talk to someone coming to the later service that you may often see in passing, but whom you do not know. If you come to the 10:30am service, consider coming 15 minutes early so you can do the same. As we make time to see each other, may we experience the presence of Jesus who is with us wherever two or three are gathered together.

In Christ's Service,
Ed

YOUTH - REVOLVE

Alex Lee Contact Information:

Phone: (919) 623-6405

Email: youth@riverroadumc.org

Looking back at June:

We kicked off the summer and the end to another school year by shooting each other with lasers! The youth had a blast at laser quest and dinner at Panera Bread. Keep an eye out for fun events through the summer!

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

Summer Schedule! – We are now on our summer schedule! No Sunday Night Youth until next school year.

July 12th: CHURCH EVENT - Family Fun Night at River Road!

July 17th: Paintball at SPLAT BROTHERS in Hopewell, VA

July 20th: Richmond Kickers Game @ 7:00pm

July 23rd: Volunteering at Shalom Farms, 1:00-4:00pm

July 30-31st: Lock-In at River Road

Ginter Park Food Pantry – Every Wednesday from 10:00am – 12:00pm, youth are invited to volunteer at Ginter Park United Methodist Church to help with food packing! Come join us as we serve our community!

Grace and peace,
Alex Lee

Reminders:

July & August Worship Schedule:

Contemporary 9 am- Children will begin service in the Fellowship Hall with their families. After the Children's Message with Pastor Darcey, the children will go down to their Sunday School rooms where parents can pick them up after service.

Traditional 10:30 am- Children will begin service in the Sanctuary with their families. After the Children's Message with Pastor Darcey, the children will go down to their Sunday School rooms where parents can pick them up after service.

Nursery

Professionally-staffed Nursery is offered in room 108 for infants, toddlers and preschoolers for all three service times (8:30, 9:30, 11:00) and Sunday evenings (September - July 2019) from 5-7 pm.

Sunday School Classes

Preschool-potty trained 3, 4 and 5-year-olds
9:30 am in room 101. 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.

M+M will be back September 15th

Dinner is served from 5-5:30 pm. 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 Ministry

Women's Prayer Breakfast – July 11

The monthly Women's Prayer Breakfast will meet at 8:30 am on Thursday, July 11, at Moore Street Café located at 2904 Moore Street, Richmond. 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.

STAFF UPDATE

Here is Jake making the introduction!

My name is Jake Joseph and I am so excited to be joining the team at River Road UMC. I am a recent graduate of Longwood University where I studied Communication Studies with a concentration in Digital Media. I was born and raised in Montpelier, Virginia in Hanover County not too far from here. Music and Youth ministry have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember and I cannot wait to be a part of it here at River Road. I believe it's important to share the joy and love of the Lord that I have experienced through my time in youth and music ministry with today's youth and church.

July Birthdays

July 1
Sterling Dameron

July 2
Conley Kemp

July 3
Blair McLarin

July 4
Julia Messer

July 6
Mark Forberg

July 9
Joanna Johnson
Mandy McLarin

July 10
Ashley Barrett
Robin Ely

July 11
Ann Hodges

July 13
Courtney Barrack
Horace Payne Jr.

July 15
Mike Cosby

July 16
Joan Goodship
Debby Waters

July 18
Brenda Vaughan
Kim Cosby

July 19
Ruben Blevins
Alicia Hotinger
Fay Seay

July 21
Sam Kemp
Greg Bowles

July 22
Karl Bren

July 23
Pearcy Flippen
Michael Wriston
Catherine Dameron

July 24
Martha Mullen

July 25
Harry Yost
Katie Ely

July 26
Beth Wilson
Mary York
Ashlyn Cosby

July 28
Trey Gayne
Jaimey Honea
Ryan Stuckey
Elizabeth York

July 31
Trent Keith

Our Missioners Leave for Florida July 21st

Families, Youth, all welcome! We extended the deadline so that all who want to go, can go. RRUMC's team is a strong one but we could still use your help as we help rebuild homes in the St. Pete/Clearwater/Tampa Bay area that were destroyed by Hurricane Irma in 2017. Desda White, who was a staff member at RRUMC and is now Disaster Case Manager for the Florida Conference UMC, alerted us to the need. All funding (including airfare) has been secured and each volunteer will receive a t-shirt and work boots. Email Jim Banta at jamesbantacorp@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

Please hold our Mission Team in your prayers for their safety and the work they have before them. They represent all of us and we are so thankful for the healing they will do in the name of Jesus. Please pray for those who have waited two years for their homes to be repaired.

Thank you Jim Banta for your great planning of this important trip.

We Host CARITAS August 10-17

River Road UMC will host homeless women August 10-17. We will need persons to help unload/load cots on Saturdays, stay overnight, groups to provide and serve dinners, pack lunches and provide breakfast foods. Mark it on your calendar and look for Sign Up Genius. The Missions Committee is so thankful for our congregation's generous support of the good works of CARITAS.

Thank you for UMCOR Kits for Conference!

River Road collected 39 Hygiene Kits, 12 School Kits and over $800 for UMCOR, United Methodist Committee on Relief! Thank you everyone! Kits were collected by churches in the VA Conference and Pastor Darcey took ours when she went to Annual Conference. We thank God for how he watches over those who will need the kits.

Micah Initiative

Be part of Richmond Hill's seeking to heal Metropolitan Richmond by volunteering at Oak Grove-Bellemeade Elementary School, our Micah school, this fall. Maybe you are hearing the call to help. Carpooling is available and makes it even more fun. Our school supply drive will begin soon. To learn more, contact Mary York at tmews.york@verizon.net.

Ginter Park UMC Food Pantry and Clothes Closet

We LOVE our volunteers and always welcome new ones each Wednesday from 9-12. Keep the food donations coming! They also need paper grocery bags with handles, gallon ziplock bags and clothes. Drop them in the Missions cabinet in the Welcome Center. For more information, contact Tony Barnette at tony.jean@verizon.net.

KAIROS

Save the Date – KAIROS Prison Ministry is September 19-22. Be on the lookout for more information about cookies and attending Closing at Deep Meadows Correctional Center on the 22nd.

School Supply Collection

Be on the lookout for the Apple Tree for Oak Grove Elementary's School Supply Collection in the Welcome Center. Pick an apple and return the supplies by Sunday, August 18th.

Thanks be to God for the work he gives us to do together. For more information about Missions, contact ellenreaves@verizon.net or 804 229 4277.

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LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

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July 2019

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.

Articles for the August 2019 Connections are due July 21, 2019.

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

Open Arms Christian Preschool

Camp Open Arms is in full swing! The children have enjoyed the weeks of "Under the Sea", "Wild, Wild, West", "Athens" and "Going Green". They've been enjoying visits from Kona Ice Truck and the Teeny Tiny Farm, along with weekly water play days! We are excited for the FUN themes for July including "Mad Science" and all the experiments we will have in the classrooms (along with a visit from Mad Scientists!).

With Summer Camp happening, we don't want to forget about Back to School and our 2019-2020 school year! Spots are limited and there are spaces if you or anyone you know would be interested, please have them contact the Preschool Director, Nora Hamlet, at 754-0027 or visit our website at www.openarmschristianpreschool.org.

OPEN ARMS
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL