



RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING 2021

We seek to provide every man, woman and child with repeated opportunities to see, hear, understand and respond to the transforming news of Jesus.

We do this as we daily follow Jesus and encourage others to do the same.

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RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

We encourage you to join us for a time of discussing church life together. We will bring an update on some of the things happening in church life, talk about the future, and discuss the budget for 2021.

Although only members vote, all friends of Riverside are welcome to be a part of and join in on the discussions at the meeting, so please come and share with us!

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting & welcome
2. Acceptance of the membership list
3. Leadership Positions for 2021
4. Presentation of Financials for 2020

**We welcome any of your questions about the budget during the congregational meeting, but we would also encourage you to direct any clarifications or questions that you might have to our treasurer, Frank Nicoletta, prior to the meeting. Thank you.*

5. Presentation of Final Proposed Budget for 2021
6. Church Ministry Updates
7. Questions/Comments

**If there are any topics that you would like discussed at this meeting, we invite you to bring them up at this time or to send an email/signed note to Rosemary Legge (Interim Board Secretary) or Rod Tupala (Board Chairman), for them to bring forward at the meeting. We welcome conversation as a church family.*

8. Closing Prayer

- 2020 Ministry Year -

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair” II Corinthians 4:7-8

The activity of orienteering is the challenge to find your way through rough and unfamiliar territory to get to a destination. This is really what 2020 was about and what shaped our church life this past year. I am proud of the things God has helped us to do as a denominational family in spite of all the obstacles that confronted us.

In early March, as the reality of Covid-19 took hold, our churches needed to suspend public gatherings for what we hoped might just be a few months. Since we are very much in the work of gathering people together, this represented a dramatic change of direction. Services were moved online and Zoom gatherings became an important tool for ministry. Overnight, our churches did a remarkable job of responding to new constraints, working creatively to minister to people. Our pastors rose to the challenge of caring for people while learning new skills for video production and communication. While at times this has been wearying, new opportunities to be the church and reach out have emerged. We have been amazed at how adaptive our communities of faith could be. I want to personally thank every leader and Pastor across all of our expressions for your efforts this past year. You have served so well!

As a denomination, we have also worked to adapt to the new realities. Our AGM in early May became a virtual event and most of our training events moved online. Virtual seminars on things like Psychological First Aid were offered. Our Fall online LEAD Day for Pastors addressed the issue of Racism and how we respond to our Black, Indigenous and People of Colour as followers of Jesus. Our Pastoral Clusters continued online throughout the year and a few of these groups were able to meet in person as restrictions eased in the Summer. We suspended a number of initiatives like our FLOW internship program and New Pastors Orientation with hopes of resumption of these ministries in 2021.

Our church camp - Camp Kahquah - was able to open for family camping but children's camps and retreats all were suspended for the year. The camp was able to offer a discount to Pastors for the Summer as a way of helping to provide a much needed break. Thanks to the remarkable work of our camp Directors Ryan & Amy Terpstra, the Camp Board, and generous donors, we were able to operate the camp with a small surplus. This was remarkable given the fact that many camps incurred significant debt. We are grateful and look forward to the future when operations can be normalized.

In spite of the pandemic restrictions, we continued to work in partnerships internationally through BIC Canada Global. We are able to fund our admin costs through our general budget enabling us to send 100% of donations that are given to projects. We are also grateful to be part of our wider Anabaptist family through Mennonite World Conference and MCC (Mennonite Central Committee). MCC turned 100 in 2020 and though some of the planned celebrations had to be adjusted, it was still wonderful to celebrate all that has been accomplished over a century of faithfulness.

Church planting continues to be a strategic priority for us. In 2020 we worked at two new REUNION starts (Niagara and Kingston) and welcomed a new church in Colombia, South America that is affiliating with the REUNION Network. In the Fall, Matt Vincent and Dean Morris participated in the REUNION Run - a fundraiser for church planting. Our church planting is supported in part with giving from our General Budget and supplemented with support from our Growth Fund to allow us to do more. We continue to seek out and pursue new opportunities.

We have continued to work to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. In March we closed our office because of Covid-19 and our staff continue to work from home. This has proven to be effective and we have made the decision to no longer maintain a physical office space which will result in considerable savings. The constraints of 2020 afforded us opportunity to refresh our website and digital platforms which is a great blessing moving forward. Giving to our shared fund was somewhat down, but we were able to reduce spending as well. We are grateful for your continued generosity which funds our BIC Canada staff and ministries. Audited financial statements are available upon request from our office.

An important annual initiative that we sponsor as a denomination is our Advent devotional guide. This year we worked even harder to transform this into more of an Advent “experience” that our churches could use as a way to enhance their celebration of Christmas. The Advent guide is also a tremendous way for us to get to know each other better across our church family and to facilitate our gifted writers. The feedback on this project has been extremely positive and we will continue to develop this important initiative going forward.

Finally, near the end of 2020 our Board of Directors completed a year-long review of our strategic goals and leadership paradigm. This process resulted in affirmation of the direction we were heading in and the offer for me to become Executive Director commencing January 1, 2021. I am glad to have had the opportunity to work as Interim Director over the last 18 months and am glad to serve the church moving into the future. I thank the Board for their confidence, as well as Todd Lester and Matt Vincent for their support. Our staff team made up of Sheryl Clark, Melanie Wigg, Bobbi Vincent, Charmaine Stulp and Trevor Main work diligently on your behalf and are available to serve you in their respective areas of responsibility.

With the prospect of vaccines to confront Covid-19 in 2021, we will see a return to some of the normal patterns of church life. This will, however, be a “new normal” as we discern what we have learned through this time and the changes it has ushered in. Through it all, God is faithful and the church is resilient. The future holds new opportunities. May God help us to embrace them.

Every blessing in Christ,

Charles Mashinter
Executive Director - Be In Christ Church of Canada

MEMBERSHIP LIST

Riverside Community Church
(as of February 2021)

Active:

Atkins, Cindy
Atkins, Mike

Benner, Mary
Berger, Sue
Bignell, Mark
Bignell, Susan
Bouchier, Aaron
Bouchier, Betsy
Bouchier, Josh
Bouchier, Paul
Bouchier, Yellie
Burger, Elaine
Burger, Paul

Chicoski, Mary Jane
Chicoski, Michael
Climenhage, Claire
Cober, Bev
Cober, Keith
Criger, Beth
Criger, Glenn

Diomin, Steve
Diomin, Jessica

Esler, Norma
Esler, Rob

Fedikow, Blythe
Fedikow, David
Fera, Dan
Fera, Juline
Fretz, Alexa
Fretz, Jay

Gale-Wolbert, Susan
Gazley, Marilyn
Giles, Glennis
Griffiths, Lois
Griffiths, Peter
Guthoerl, Chrissy

Hennessy, Dwight
Hennessy, Sandra
Hoover, Dana
Hoover, Nancy

Jewell, Kerrie
Jewell, Kevin

Kohinski, Cindy

Legge, David
Legge, Rosemary
Love, Lynne
Lupsor, Alex

Marr, Michelle
Marr, Terry
Marshall, Jean
McFadden, Jared
McFadden, Jillian
McGhie, Catharine

Natale, Andrea
Nelson, Jennifer
Neubauer, Kelly
Nicoletta, Frank
Nicoletta, Joanna

Osorio, Carlos
Osorio, Lyda
Osorio, Carlos Jr.

Reid, Lori
Reid, Pete
Reinhardt, Jack
Reimer, Julie
Reimer, Nathan
Robertshaw, Colin
Robertshaw, Joan
Roest, Brian
Roest, Heather

Schoenwald, Gladys
Seymour, Mark
Shaw, Dale
Shaw, Ann Marie
Sider, Joan
Sider, Robert
Stepien, Alicia
Stepien, Mike
Stewart, Carolyn
Stewart, Jay
Stickland, Lorna
Stickland, Wes

Topa, Kim
Topa, Rob
Tupala, Lisa
Tupala, Rod
Tyrrell, Jessie

Walter, Gloria

Total Active: 90

In-Active:

Biller, Cassie
Blais, Michael
Blue, Marjorie
Clements, Greg
Clements, Kate
Cordiner, Eleanor
Coulombe, Shelley
Coulombe, Bob
Cvirik, Esther
Gooderham, Gord
Griffith, Anne Marie
Guthoerl, Jeff
Hebbourn, Doris
Heyde, Denise
Kipling, Denise
Kipling, Kelly
Labreche, Jocelyne
Parker, Brenda
Parker, Rod
Pleschke, Linda
Riegle, Lynda
Riegle, Terry
Sider, Larry
Sider, Sharon
Struyk, Michelle
Struyk, Mike
Wagnleithner, Helga
Warkentin, Cindy
Warkentin, Kent
Winger, Lyle
Non-Resident:
Moreau, Jeanette
Wilkie, Sarah

Total Inactive/

Non-Resident: 33

Total Membership: 123

*Riverside Policy: after 2 years of absence from Riverside, contact will be made to the individual (where possible) which will invite them to return to Riverside but will also pass on that due to 2 years of absence their name will be respectfully removed from membership list.

PERSONNEL REPORT – 2020 (Amendment – March 5, 2020)

ELECTIONS

BIC Annual General Meeting – Sunday May 30, 2021 at The Meeting House, Oakville			
Nominated:	Pastor Dan Fera	Rob Esler	Rosemary Legge
	Juline Fera	Norma Esler	
Back Up:	Rod Tupala & Lisa Tupala		

Trustees (2 yr terms)			Term
		<i>Keith Cober</i>	2022
		<i>David Legge</i>	2022

Deacons (2 yr terms)			
		Gladys Schoenwald	2021
		Dwight Hennessy	2022
		Sandra Hennessy	2022
		Rob Esler	2022
		Norma Esler	2022
		<i>Juline Fera</i>	2022

Church Board Leadership Team (2 yr terms)			
		Rod Tupala (Chair)	2021
		Norma Esler* (Secretary & Deacon Rep)	2022
<i>Propose: Treasurer becomes non-elected ex-officio Frank Nicoletta (Treasurer) – board term end 2020 CCM</i>		<i>Beth Criger (Ministries)</i>	2022
		<i>Steve Diomin (Trustees)</i>	2022
		Rosemary Legge* (Congregation)	2022
		<i>Jared McFadden</i>	2022

Nominating Committee (2 yr terms)			
		Board Representative	
		<i>Joanna Nicoletta</i>	2022
		<i>Lisa Tupala</i>	2022
		Lead Pastor	

All terms of service terminate at the Annual Meeting of the year indicated beside the name. The responsibilities of those positions begin at Council Meeting, following Council's approval.

*Elected per 2015 BIC Handbook of Faith & Life requirement of 3 yr term
(Names in bold & italic represent NEW or RE-ELECTED personnel)

OTHER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:

Fellowship:

Corporate Meals
Christmas Banquet
Coffee Catch-Up
Hospitality (meals)
Welcome Team
Ushers/Greeters
Website
Library
Riverside/BIC Missions
Cuba Partnership
Local Outreach/Peace Bridge
COM (Church Outreach Meals)

Dan Fera, Rod Tupala and more...
Rob & Norma Esler
Lynne Love
Deacons
Church Office/Glenn Criger
Church Office/Rod Tupala
Riverside Office
Nancy Hooper & Committee
Bev Cober & Committee
Dwight Hennessy

Project Manager: Rob & Marianne Lawrence
Team Leaders: Joan & Rob Sider, Shirley Pomeroy, and
Jeremy Tyrrell

Representatives:

Camp Kahquah Rep.
MCC/MDS Rep

Alexa Fretz
Glenn Criger

Prayer:Prayer Connection

Joan Sider

Planning Ministries:

Planning / Financial Team

Steve Diomin (Trustee), TBD

Adult Ministries:

Good Ol' Boys Men's Breakfast
Ladies Breakfast
Women's Ministry
Small Groups
Prayer Groups

Robert Sider
Diane Boles
TBD
Mark Bignell
TBD

Sunday School:

Nursery (Newborn - 4 years)
B.L.A.S.T. (5 years - Grade 5)

Cindy Atkins
Cindy Atkins

Kids Ministry Leader:

Cindy Atkins

Youth Ministry Leader:

Youth Helpers (Jr. High)

Heather Kucman

Joe & Heather Kucman, Matt & Diana Woehl

Youth Helpers (Sr. High)

Joe & Heather Kucman, Adam Stickland, Rose Learn

Worship Ministry Leader:

Music

Sound/PowerPoint

Janna Griffiths

Janna Griffiths, Wes Stickland, Nathan Reimer

TBD

BUDGET

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH
PROPOSED BUDGET 2021 - General Fund
Preliminary

	Approved		Proposed	
Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Actual 2020	Budget 2021	

RIVERSIDE ADMINISTRATION & PROPERTY

Harmonized Sales Tax	8,225	2,750	3,467	3,000
Insurance	1,377	3,500	5,435	5,500
Memberships & Subscriptions	1,678	1,640	1,018	1,560
Advertising & Publicity	2,177	500	76	500
Office - Website Maintenance, Internet Service	3,961	1,412	4,216	3,700
Office - Supplies, Photocopier, etc.	5,988	6,000	7,421	6,000
Banking Fees	520	780	1,283	1,400
Professional Fees	0	5,000	0	1,000
Telephone	2,997	2,424	2,861	1,500
Building Maintenance/Cleaning & Supplies	1,249	15,000	36,592	10,000
Capital Improvements, Furniture & Equipment	1,260	2,500	4,507	3,000
Snow Removal/Grounds Maintenance	0	2,000	0	2,000
Rent	24,250	49,400	17,439	5,000
Utilities - Electricity, Natural Gas, Water	5,187	14,600	19,455	11,000
Decorations	23	250	0	250

Total Riverside Administration & Property	58,892	107,756	103,769	55,410
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RIVERSIDE MINISTRIES

Children's Ministry - Nursery - Preschoolers	203	300	100	500
Children's Ministry - Kindergarden - Grade 1	134	400	0	0
Children's Ministry - Grades 2 - 5	606	1,000	412	1,000
Youth Ministry - Jr., Grades 6 - 8	3,035	3,500	2,192	3,000
Youth Ministry - Sr., Grades 9 - 12	2,339	3,000	2,013	2,500
Small Groups / Adult Ministry	2,384	3,500	1,292	1,500
Ministry Training & Development	2,597	2,500	423	1,000
Library	0	250	120	200
Benevolence	1,183	2,000	800	2,500
Hospitality & Gifts	564	500	1,620	1,500
Social - Coffee Catch up, BBQ's, Dinners, JOY	746	1,500	1,344	1,500
Social - Sports	415	750	0	250
Social - Christmas Banquet	528	500	0	500
Worship - Sound Equipment & Music Supplies	12,262	8,000	5,923	1,500
Special Services & Communion	55	200	79	200
Honorariums	1,375	1,800	400	1,000

Total Riverside Ministries	28,428	29,700	16,717	18,650
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PROPOSED BUDGET 2021 - General Fund

Actual 2019	Budget 2020	Actual 2020	Budget 2021
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MISSIONS, LOCAL OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

Missions - Fall Conference	109	250	0	250
Missions - Cuba - Trip Support & Admin	2,200	2,500	0	0
Missions - Cuba - Salaries & Support	1,185	1,500	0	0
Missions	0	2,000	0	0
Outreach Events - Vacation Bible School	2,145	2,000	1,531	1,500
Outreach Events - Rentals/Peace Bridge/Events	1,009	1,250	0	0
Church Outreach Meals	2,829	4,000	657	2,000
Camp Kahqahah Ministry Assistance	3,865	4,000	0	3,000
Partnerships - South Niagara Life Ministries	5,250	5,000	5,000	5,000
Partnerships - BIC Missions / Global	75	0	0	0
Partnerships - Camp Kaquuah	160	0	0	0

Total Missions, Local Outreach & Partnerships

18,828	22,500	7,188	11,750
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Total Staff

196,664	184,328	167,125	171,208
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Government Grants

0	0	-40,820	-24,000
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Total Staff - Net of Grants

196,664	184,328	126,305	147,208
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Sub Totals

302,812	344,284	253,979	233,018
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Cooperative Ministries, 10%

24,807	34,428	21,011	23,302
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General Fund Totals

327,619	378,712	274,990	256,320
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Weekly Average Receipts - Required

6,300	7,283	5,288	4,929
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Weekly Average Receipts - Received

5,401	4,631
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Tithes/Offerings/Interest

280,877	240,799
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Surplus/(Deficit)

-46,742	-34,191	-15,521
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NOTES

2020 MINISTRY REPORTS

LEAD PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor Dan Fera

As I sit to write this, on a snowy day early in 2021, there is not enough distance from 2020 to “enjoy” thinking about it...and yet I feel a measure of joy. Like when you wake up camping, cold and damp from dew and outdoor sleep, and wonder if you’ll ever get the fire started again, only to stir ashes and find some coals ready to bring the fire back to life! I feel that way. Not that this past year hasn’t been hard, but I know that the fire hasn’t burned all the way out, even though this trial lingers. There is an abiding confidence that 2020 has not been intended to consume us, but to accomplish some greater Goal. Not the goals of governments or pharmaceutical companies or worry-warts – but the goals of our immortal, invisible, loving Father who “knows the plans He has for us, plans to bless us and not to harm us.” I dare to look back over this year without that in my heart. Even though we lost lovely people and suffered through being apart, alone and feeling like this can’t be God’s best. I can say that I haven’t always known what God’s best does look like, until I look back and can trace His Hand. And so, I hope to look back at 2020 through that lens.

Of course, there were many dates and events in 2020 that mark out our changes and struggles. Leaving the Chapel at NCC on January 12; starting at Greater Fort Erie Secondary School the following Sunday...only to have that stay cut short for our first lockdown on March 12. Having services at home – with just our own family members by March 22, going right through the summer and to the very last day before regathering about half our people at the Crystal Ridge Community Centre on September 20. Those were the macro changes, but there have been many other dates and events woven in. Taking ownership and refreshing the building at 43 Hagey Ave – our *Hub* of ministry. We opened the space for 60 times of prayer in June, which became our new home in July for our staff, youth, kids, young adults & some small groups in the Fall and Winter.

Sprinkled throughout the building changes, there were also special Sundays and milestones. Our Congregational Council Meeting held on March 8 would be our last indoor gathering for over 6 months. We did business, but we also broke bread and shared a proper communion meal of bread and juice – but also pizza and sandwiches and – the most sustaining part of that evening – Fellowship!! Though it would be months before we could gather indoors, many of you had porch visits and even participated in dropping off Mother’s Day gifts to all our ladies, and Father’s Day gifts to all our men. Summer was so different than many had planned, but three young ladies followed their hearts and God’s urging to be baptized in the river on August 2. Followed by one more on a cold day in November, proving that God is not silent or passive even when the world is full of fear. There was no Christmas banquet, but we were still able to end the year singing around burning barrels in the parking lot at The Hub. And, like many other moments in 2020, that too became a testimony as we shared fudge with the firefighters who came to visit after the neighbours worried over our joyful flames. 😊

The Beni's leaving on the last day of February; Alexa resigning at the end of the summer were certainly sad moments. And yet their ministries and years of hard work have set up Heather & Joe to serve our students, Janna, Wes & Nathan continue to lead our worship, and for Norma to step into the Administrative Assistant role. Cindy has continued to serve young and less-young alike through this complicated time, and we've all seen God's goodness and blessing in her life and ministry even though it has been a challenge to connect in these days of distancing! None of this has been easy, or "business as usual", and yet there is an abiding confidence that God has not left nor forsaken. Rather He has prepared us for struggle and has strengthened us by walking with us **through** this time, though we all would rather have gone around.

Aside from staff there have been celebrations of new lives in the Klassen & Bouchier homes. Sadly, grief has also visited the homes of many others. It does seem that there have been far too many funerals, and each of those less comfortable (and comforting) under the new rules. Even so, our Comforter has been present, and we have also been able to show ourselves useful and faithful as God's hands and feet. You may ache for those who have lost friends and family this year, but you need to also be encouraged by how much Riverside has cared for, blessed, served and encouraged our brothers and sisters in their losses.

Let me share a bit directly from the Fera's. How has 2020 been for us? New in town, in a new calling, and just begun in a new church family. There is no one word that stands out, but the contrasts certainly outline the picture in my mind! The highest points of joy and expectation came throughout some of the most complicated weeks. Here were a few highlights: A great time of fellowship at our sad farewell for the Beni's; dinner around the way-too-big dining room table with our staff and families (there were 14 of us that night); another with our Leadership Board and their spouses. Services in the backyard, cranking the worship songs to drown out the birds. Watching Gabby fall farther in love with Jesus while making new friends and figuring out school in a pandemic. So much has been bitter-sweet, but much more sweet than bitter! It has been complicated, and yet beautiful in God's messy, loving way.

Recording messages in an office (or a convertible) is weird. Doing anything over ZOOM makes me tired. Making friends we cannot see, living near Mexican restaurants in Buffalo we cannot eat at, knowing the Blue Jays were only 10 km away but we couldn't go cheer. And then: gathering again! ...but not being able to hug or sing. Many moments have been frustrating, and yet we have never received more encouragement, had more heartfelt wishes and thoughtful notes and gifts, nor felt more excited – ever – to just be a part of an expression of Christ's church. We have heard, numerous times, how some of you feel sure that God has brought us here for "such a time as this". I echo that, wholeheartedly!

We came to Fort Erie very sore and broken, lacking in confidence, and wondering how our wounds wouldn't be a huge burden for everyone involved. We were also aware of how much you all had been through in the previous 4 years. It seemed, to my mind, like the best recipe would be peace and quiet...but that was not to be. And yet now, looking back, I see that God has been saying to us (to the Fera's and to Riverside) a similar message: *I am with you! I am for you! And you are not so weak as you feel. Remember, when you are weak but faithful, then you are strong!* It is so good of our Father to give us chances to heal and grow, and to do that together!

I look forward to what God alone sees and is working for us as He *“works all things to the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes.”* Who knows how things will look a year from now? I, for one, am excited to look back from a little farther ahead and see how even this difficult year proves, yet again, that He is for us and not against us and, ultimately: ***God’s Got This!***

Pastor Dan Fera

(Submitted by: Pastor Dan Fera)

LADIES MINISTRY

On the last Thursday of every month an open invitation is extended to all women to join in our Ladies Breakfast Ministry. Living through this pandemic has brought its challenges and although we cannot share breakfast our fellowship together has continued to grow. Covid brought us closer together in prayer and personal relationships. God's work continued to be evident this year as we welcomed many new women into our Ministry during our "Zoom Gatherings", including women outside of our congregation. We have enjoyed socially distanced backyard gatherings, meeting at the Hub, and of course our "Zoom Gatherings".

We spent our time of sharing with interactive fun games or themes, so each of us has the opportunity to get to know each other on a more personal level. Many women have stepped into the leadership role to keep it fresh and fun. The atmosphere is always casual and full of laughs. We have had many inspiring testimonies and devotions delivered giving us yet another opportunity to rejoice in God's work.

Our ministry supported the South Niagara Life Ministries' Christmas campaign. We also actively engage in encouraging members of our congregation with home visits, phone calls, and organizing meals for those who have a need.

This year in May we will be celebrating our 5th year anniversary and we are planning to fund and plant a tree at our "Hub" to commemorate this event.

We pray God continues to help and guide our Ministry reach further into our Community.

Respectfully submitted,

Ladies' Breakfast Ministry

(Submitted by Diane Boles)

MEN'S MINISTRY

COMMUNITY WIDE MEN'S BREAKFAST:

The Community Wide Men's Breakfast Ministry was suspended during 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

(Submitted by Rob Esler)

GOOD OL' BOYS BREAKFAST

In previous years we have met the second Tuesday of each month at Mae's Restaurant in Stevensville and averaged about 5-8 men. We met for a time for breakfast and shared with one another concerns and praises.

In the past year we lost three of our men who regularly met who have gone on to heaven. I believe we only met once or twice in 2020.

We look forward to once again meeting with each other when this pandemic is over and it's safe to get together.

(Submitted by Robert Sider)

YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

On February 19th 2020, we held a good bye banquet for Nolan and Rachel Beni. The students had an opportunity to say "thank you" and reflect on the many memories made while the Beni's were at Riverside. I think it was a very peaceful and godly way to transition into the new season of youth ministry at Riverside. Our hope was that by having Nolan, Rachel, Joe and I together to re-assure the youth that the 4 of us were certain in the direction that God was moving, would provide confidence instead of uncertainty for the days ahead.

On March 4th 2020, Joe and I were thrilled to jump into Riverside youth ministry with both feet. Our hearts and minds were full as we started to plan for the weeks, months, and year ahead. We were able to have a grand total of 2 in person Sr high events and 1 in person Jr high event before the world pressed pause on March 14th. Those initial days of learning online life were filled with much uncertainty and there were many frustrating moments. However, as I reflect back on that time, I can say with certainty that I can see God's faithful hand and over arching purposes prevail in 2020.

During the months of April-July we were able to engage with the youth via a weekly online youth group which consisted of a lesson time, taught by Joe or and I, followed by a virtual game. We also launched the "Riverside Youth Video Challenge series" on March 30th. This was 8 weeks of challenges including, create a social distance commercial, create the most epic paper airplane, do your best bible character impersonation, create a "youth perfect" video showing your best trick shot, create a campaign video explaining why you should be a presidential running mate if Joe should ever run for president, Riverside youth have talent, re-create your childhood photos, and the mannequin challenge. Our amazing youth leaders Josh and Yeilin got the tough job of judging each challenge and prizes were awarded to each individual winner as well as a grand prize for 1st/2nd and 3rd place overall 8 weeks. These were really fun ways to stay engaged and connected while physically apart.

During the lock down months we also did 12 different interactive daily online bible studies together as a group. We covered a wide range of topics such as, "Better together- connecting with God and each other", The passion Easter devo, Stepping up to God's call, Chosen and appointed, Jesus over everything, Living with abandon for the things of God, worship, Who's your One, and more. These studies were a great way to dig a little deeper into God's word regarding topics relevant to the youth.

As summer progressed into August, we were thrilled to have 3 of our students ask to be baptized!! Thanks to loosened restrictions Joe and I were able to meet with each of the girls and hear the moving ways that God had spoken to them during the lock down months. Ava Nicoletta, Keira Atkins and

Michaela Atkins were baptized on August 2nd in the Niagara river. Each recorded their powerful testimonies of God speaking to them when the rest of the world was silent. It was a day I will never forget.

By the beginning of September, we were able to begin meeting back in person with the youth. This of course had its challenges... youth and social distancing are not a natural combination... throw masks into the mix and we knew we were going to have to get creative... again!

Here is the incredible thing Joe and I have learned about Riverside youth.... They are truly resilient. As a whole, this group of students seem to meet each challenge with respectful determination to make each situation work. Their eagerness to just be together is contagious and they are truly a bright light in our lives. We consider it a joy to serve them.

From Sept-December we were able to meet weekly with the Sr high students and bi-weekly with the Jr high students. The Hub has been a great spot for us to have many different events including movie night, retro night, pumpkin night, game board café night, among us night, Christmas night and more. The youth also took part in several "give back" projects this year. A couple of them include, the Jr high students collecting non-perishable food and assembling 5 full thanksgiving meals for families in our community. Sr high students drew and wrote 40 cards for one of our local long term care homes in town.

Our teaching focus for the first half of the year was practical subjects that apply to the everyday lives of our students... in both Jr and Sr high. It has led to some very good conversation and some challenging questions.... Both are a blessing.

In November we had another student ask to be baptized!! After sitting down with Mackenzie Arts, we knew that her passion for God had led her to this decision and so we were determined to make it happen for her regardless of the weather limitations. We knew that the river was not an option so creative planning began. Thanks to the inventive minds of Jerry Arts and Joe we were able to have our first ever parking lot/blow up pool/ socially distanced baptism and it was amazing. Mackenzie was able to share her testimony via video and it was a day we will never forget.

This year we are also running the Leaders in Training program (Or L.I.T. as we call it). We have 8 students who meet with us once a month to discuss what a godly leader looks like, and how they can grow into the leaders that God has called them to be. They also have fun planning the themed events for each month. We have continued our sponsorship of Flora B from Zimbabwe and the LIT's planned and implemented 3 fundraising campaigns this fall (Flamingo's for Flora, The no bake bake sale and Facemasks for Flora). We were so thrilled and thankful to have raised \$1619.19!!!! On behalf of the LIT's I want to say a huge THANK YOU to all of our church family who supported these fundraising efforts.

The last update is about the launch of the first ever "Riverside Young Adults group". With many of our students graduating from youth but staying home due to the pandemic we saw a need for a group that would reach the 18-25 year old demographic. So, Pastor Dan, Jules, Joe and I were able to host the first young adults night on November 6th. We are excited to see what God has in store for this group in the coming months.

In closing I want to say a huge thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers who make youth happen. Rose, Adam, Josh, Yeilin, Aaron, Cindy, Mike A, Alicia, Averie & Gabby, you are such a blessing. Joe and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Although there is a lot of uncertainty about the year ahead, we are looking forward to seeing what God has in store for Riverside youth. Joe and I feel grateful and blessed to be apart of this ministry. Thank you for welcoming us to these roles with warm support.

Blessings to you,

Heather Kucman

(Worship & Youth Ministry Leader)

CHILDRENS MINISTRY REPORT

Sunday Morning

2020 has been a year of change and adaptation! We started by leaving the comfort and familiarity of Sunday morning Children's Programs at the chapel on the NCC campus, to becoming a fully mobile Children's Ministry program in GFESS! From January to the second week of March, we had an average of 19 children each week in our Sunday morning Children's Programs (with an average of 8 in our Nursery/Preschool class and 11 in our SK-Grade 5 class).

We continue to use The Meeting House curriculum. The Early Years lessons incorporate play-based learning to reinforce the Bible truths. It allows our youngest to hear God's story and know Jesus' love. The Kids lessons use interactive activities, games and crafts to reinforce Biblical truths. They learn how each story in scripture connects to God's big story, and ultimately points to Jesus.

Mid-March, COVID-19 became a thing and we had to learn "How to Run a Children's Ministry During a Pandemic"! Sunday morning children's programs transitioned late spring to online kids' services, with a variety of our volunteers recording lessons, which were then compiled into a video to be posted on YouTube each week. Beginning in August, we transitioned back to using The Meeting House curriculum for our online kids' services, and created our own kids' ministry YouTube channel (Kids Ministry Riverside) to share these lessons.

While in-person Sunday morning services returned mid-September until December, we have not been able to resume in-person Sunday morning Children's Programs. This fall, in addition to the online videos, we have been delivering monthly packages to all of our children from about age 2 ½ to Grade 5, with supplies for the month: colouring, crafts, and games supplies to use at home adjacent to the video lessons. Our website (www.riversidebic.com/kids) is updated weekly with links to the YouTube video lessons, links to kid's worship song videos online, and our printable activities (for anyone who doesn't receive our monthly packages to make use of).

A humungous "thanks" for all of our adult and youth volunteers in Children's Ministry who have been so supportive throughout this past year! In person and online, I absolutely could not have done any of this

without you! We have such an amazing group in Riverside Community Church, that it brings tears of gratitude to my eyes as I type this report. Thank you, thank you!

Monthly Kids Events

These began in 2020 at Garrison Road Church, with an average of 14 children attending these events. With the effects of COVID-19, by mid-spring we had transitioned to online Kids Zoom weekly meetings, which we continued to near the end of the school year. Our Kids Zoom became much more Bible focused for the hour we engaged with the kids, including Bible scavenger hunts, Bible lessons, Bible verse memorization, ending our evenings with a game of Pictionary or charades! We hosted 3 in-person monthly Kids Events at the Hub from October to December, continuing to put our greatest focus on fun Bible learning with games, lessons, memory verses and other activities centered on the Bible theme for the month.

Thank you so much to Alicia Stepien, Heather Kucman and Jill McFadden for your help and support with monthly Kids Events. And to all of our youth helpers who engage with the kids, teach crafts and verses and provide extra sets of hands to make our nights run smoothly! A big THANK YOU!

VBS

Our theme this year was “Concrete & Cranes: Building on the Love of Jesus” with our theme verse being Philippians 1:6. Thanks to a multitude of volunteers who once again cut, packaged, and this year boxed up our VBS supplies so we could do “VBS in a Box” for 60 kids in our church and community! Thank you to the adult and youth volunteers who recorded lessons, skits and craft instructions...all via online! Although we would of course prefer to do VBS in person, we are grateful will still had the opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with many non-church children and their families! Once again, thank you to everyone who helped make a very unique VBS possible! We are already looking forward to, and in the planning stages, to share Jesus through VBS again in 2021!

(Respectfully submitted by Cindy Atkins – Children’s and Seniors Ministry Leader)

PRAYER CHAIN

‘Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.’ Col. 2:4 NLT

God created us for community.....and Riverside’s prayer chain is a loving and caring avenue for us to connect. As requests are received, emails are sent out to alert the prayer chain of the needs and requests of family and friends within our church and community. It also provides opportunities for us to develop thankful hearts as we see how God works in the hearts and lives of those individuals and situations we are praying for.

As requests are received and emails sent out, we have many individuals, couples and families from RCC who have been faithful in praying for these over this past year. We have experienced the privilege of praying for salvation, health concerns, loss of loved ones, God’s provision, comfort, peace, wisdom for a difficult situation, healing for broken relationships and more. Always seeking, a God who listens.....

It has been said so frequently that this has been an unprecedented year. That is so true. But God....God is still the same never changing, faithful, loving and all knowing God.....He still longs to hear and answer our prayers.....in His way and in His time.

As we look forward to another year, we would welcome anyone who desires to join us in lifting up the requests of our church family and seeing God at work.

In Him,

Joan Sider

DEACONS REPORT

2020 has been a year like no other and serving as Deacons through this difficult time has had its own challenges. As a team we have done what we can to remain connected with our congregation and to encourage, uplift and provide for the various needs in our little community of believers, and sometimes within the greater community of Fort Erie as well. I have found this year to be one of the most rewarding years to serve as a deacon because it means so much to people when we are able to bring them a meal or a card, flowers or communion. That connection has been very much appreciated, especially by those who like Dwight and I, were unable to attend church and chose to participate mostly online.

The year began with the team taking a closer look at visitation and setting up a calendar to make sure people who need it, were receiving a visit or phone call from someone on the Deacon team or Riverside Staff. We took time as a team to connect with them about their needs and prayer requests and prayed with them when they wished it. We began to have our own meetings on zoom when we couldn't meet in the church and we took time to look over the directory to make it up-to-date as much as possible. Each of our meetings began with a devotional time and concluded with time spent in prayer for the many requests and needs of our congregation and community.

We delivered Poinsettias to shut-ins at Christmas time, as we have in previous years but this time included an advent calendar and communion.

There were many needs over the year, sadly including several funerals where despite Covid restrictions, the team was able to provide meals and condolences. We also provided many meals to people recovering from surgery, returning from hospital or just to people who were in need or on their own. We also agreed to support some people financially after prayer and consideration of the need...recognizing that 2020 was a very hard year for many.

Our hope as you read this and become more familiar with the role of the Deacon team, is that you would know that there are people at the church to talk to when you have a need and that we are here to support you through prayer and phone calls, visits, meals and more.

The Deacon Team

Dan and Jules Fera, Rob and Norma Esler, Sandra and Dwight Hennessy and Gladys Schoenwald.

(Submitted by Sandra Hennessy)

JOY GROUP MINISTRY (50+ Ministry)

2020 has definitely been a challenging year for so many of our seniors! And it is in senior's ministry that I have struggled most with trying to be effective and fulfil the calling of this role.

Due to generally adverse weather in January and February, the decision had been made to kick off 2020 with our first JOY luncheon in March, and to continue with our 3rd year of involving our kids and youth in the March break JOY luncheon, through serving and a little program. Of course, just days before our first JOY luncheon of 2020, we were faced with COVID-19 and a province wide lockdown.

Most of 2020 senior's ministry has consisted of phone calls, porch visits, emails and some small encouragement packages. And it doesn't feel like it has been enough; small connections amid a big pandemic. This past year has made me more aware of the need to create small group community within Riverside Community Church. For families and seniors and adults to connect in small, intergenerational groups in a way that allows for a better and more intimate connection: to encourage, pray for and meet practical needs!

Thank you to so many of our seniors who ministered to each other through phone calls, encouragement and porch visits where possible. Thank you to those reached out to our seniors as the Lord put them on your heart. Thank you to all who have, and continue to do so, pray without ceasing for those who call Riverside their home.

(Respectfully submitted by Cindy Atkins – Children's and Seniors Ministry Leader)

LOCAL OUTREACH

COM - Church Outreach Meals

This group has been inactive due to Covid restrictions on gathering.

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Hebrews 13:16

(No report available for 2020.)

SMALL GROUPS

BARN MINISTRY: MEN'S GROUP – Monday evenings, led by Rob Esler and John Wallace

The BARN ministry was started approximately 4 ½ years ago. The word BARN is an acronym for “Broken And Restored New”. As the name may imply, yes we do meet in a barn. My good friend John Wallace owns a farm in Ridgeway and you guessed it, it has a barn, and the rest is history as they say. We meet on Monday nights at 4548 Michener Road at 7:00pm with the exception of holiday Mondays. The whole purpose of the BARN is to stand beside one another, to encourage one another, to support one another and to accept one another as we are. Men from the BARN will also go to people's homes or hospitals and pray for anyone in need of prayer. A typical meeting begins with an opening prayer which then leads into our share time. After our share time there is a quick break before a testimony or message is given. At the conclusion of the message if anyone wants to discuss it we do so. The last part of the evening is I feel the most important. We write down prayer requests from one another so that we can keep each other in prayer all week.

In 2020, we met as much as we could lawfully, and presented video messages when we couldn't get together. In any case, we continued to share our concerns and pray for one another and those that the Lord placed on our hearts.

(Submitted by Rob Esler)

LADIES SMALL GROUP – Monday 10:30am at the Church Office (led by Cindy Atkins)

Our Monday daytime Ladies Bible Study has mostly continued throughout 2020. It is always a blessing to me, as the women who are part of our study share both challenges and lessons learned in their walk with Jesus. We entered the world of Zoom in the spring as we continued studying Francis Chan's “Crazy Love” when we were no longer able to meet in person due to the lockdown. However, Zoom has challenges and it was decided in late spring to wrap up our online study and resume, God willing, in September in person.

When we resumed in September, some of our women felt comfortable to join in person, and some were not able to join us. Those who were able to meet, we completed our “Crazy Love” study and moved on to study “The Armor of God” by Priscilla Shirer; an amazing study and challenge to equip ourselves with God's own armor for the battles we face each day!

As 2020 ended with another lockdown, the decision was made (within the limits of the provincial guidelines) that Ladies Bible Study would continue – for as long as needed – in 2021 as both an in-person and Zoom study for our Jennie Allen study on “Stuck”.

Thank you to this wonderful group of ladies who have been gracious and flexible in a challenging year. We rejoice over the new participants who have been able to be a part of our group; and look forward to a time when those who have had not been able to join either in person or online are once again able to be a part of the Monday daytime study.

(Submitted by Cindy Atkins)

YOUNG COUPLES GROUP – Monthly on Monday evenings led by Steve Diomin

This group has been inactive due to Covid restrictions on gathering.
(Submitted by Steve Diomin)

SMALL GROUP – Meeting Wednesdays alternating locations & leaders

Our Wednesday group was active throughout 2020, gathering in person when permitted and getting together on Zoom when prohibited due to Covid 19 restrictions. We spent some time studying *The Seven Laws of Love* by Dave Willis. We also did a 5 week study of Matthew 7:24-27 called Withstand Any Storm through Time of Grace Ministries on the YouVersion Bible App.

Throughout the year we stayed in touch to support, encourage, and care for one another in any way we could. I'm especially thankful for the support of our small group during the past year.

(Submitted by Rosemary Legge)

LADIES SMALL GROUP – Wednesday evenings led by Bev Cober (hosted by Bev Cober & Heather Stapleton)

We had a couple of gatherings during the January/February months before Covid hit. Then during the spring to fall months, when we were allowed to gather outside, I met with individuals to maintain relationships and to support in prayer.

(Respectfully submitted by Bev Cober)

MISSIONS REPORT

CAMP KAHQUAH

In the almost 60 years since Camp Kahquah was established, 2020 was a year of many challenges. With one of the missions being to offer children's camp in July each year, it was disappointing to have these programs cancel due to the pandemic of Covid-19.

Through the leadership of the Directors, Ryan & Amy Terpstra, the camp offered rentals during all the summer months and continued into the fall. They were able to give Pastors within the Be In Christ Churches a special invitation to use their cabins as a vacation/respice to rest and recharge during the many challenges of the Spring. They worked hard to create safe space for families and were able to focus on a few projects around the camp during this time as well.

Kahquah has always continued its ministry through the strong and consistent support from its donors, and during 2020 these supporters really came through! Many donations come in throughout the summer to keep the Camp afloat, including a special donation to help with the purchase of a new maintenance truck. What a blessing for the camp! With the loss of children's camp and many other special retreats that were planned for 2020, Camp Kahquah was able to finish the year in the black financially thanks to its supporters and wise leadership from the Terpstra's!

Please continue to pray for the camp in 2021! Pray for the directors, the leadership board, staff and children who love coming to camp each year.

(Submitted by Alexa Fretz)

EAST NIAGARA MISSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT (Members: Bev Cober, David Legge)

ANNUAL WINTER AREA MISSIONS BREAKFAST: was held March 7th at Bertie Church where once again we had a delicious buffet breakfast. We were blessed to have with us, missionaries Bruce and Merly Bundy, who have been with BIC Missions since 1988 in Spain. Having recently become empty-nesters, the Bundy's have moved outside of Madrid to church plant in a new location, and to allow the Madrid church to proceed with its National leadership which they have trained.

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE RELIEF KITS: 9 MCC Relief Kits were collected from our church this year. (The BinC Church Canada is a member of MCC)

THE GOSPEL TIDE RADIO MINISTRY: Bev Cober has joined the Canadian Board for this world wide evangelistic ministry which has annually been highlighted at our Fall Missions Conferences. (Bev replaced Anne Marie Griffiths when she moved to Oakville. Anne was a member of Riverside for many years.) Please talk to Bev if you are interested in supporting a ministry which is focused on evangelism in many countries such as Croatia, India, and Zimbabwe. This is a front-line ministry reaching souls for the kingdom.

GENERAL MISSIONS: During this stay-at-home time, please continue to pray for our missionaries and for our brothers and sisters in the Lord around the world. They are also experiencing additional hardships due to the covid-19 situation. Pastors have had to be creative of how to minister even in rural areas such as Shemlal Hembron, a pastor in Nepal. We are one in the Lord and what a wonderful thing that is.

CUBA MINISTRY REPORT

Ministry Goals:

The Cuba Ministry is focused on partnering with BIC Cuba, in their efforts to build and strengthen the church body as they proclaim the message of God's grace and salvation through Jesus Christ throughout Cuba. The focus has been on assisting in the building of their leadership center, on sharing in ministry opportunities, and on building meaningful relationships with members of their community.

This group was inactive in 2020 to Covid restrictions on travel.

(Respectfully submitted by Dwight Hennessy)