

★ ★ ★ HAPPY ★ ★ ★
INDEPENDENCE DAY
4TH OF JULY



Twin Cities Christian

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of Riverview Park Christian Church

JULY 2024

2929 Niles Road, St. Joseph MI 269.429.0700 www.riverviewparkchristianchurch.com Follow us on FACEBOOK!

A PLACE AT THE TABLE IN THE TWIN CITIES

Each Sunday when I lead communion, I try to emphasize that this table around which we gather is open to all, just as Jesus shared a meal not only with his closest disciples but also with the thousands who followed him during his ministry. All were welcome to break bread with Jesus, for all were equally children of God, and that remains true today.

We can see echoes of that commitment in the two new monuments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. being erected in Benton Harbor as well as St. Joseph as part of the Unified Civic Project (You can find out more about the project at unifiedmonuments.org).

Laura and I attended the ground-breaking for the Benton Harbor half of the monument on June 19 (as part of the city's Juneteenth celebration).



If you go to the Project's website, you'll see pictures of both monuments. In Benton Harbor, Dr. King is standing beside a large table, and across the table a little girl is about to sit down at the table. Behind Dr. King on a stone backdrop are carved the words, "A Seat at the Table." The description of this monument on the website says Dr. King has "arms outstretched, encouraging all to join the conversation."

That was the essence of Dr. King's work, to make sure everyone had a seat at the table. We'll know we have achieved that goal when the people who have historically been excluded and discriminated against have their place alongside everyone else. That's our call to work for equity, justice, and an end to racism.

The Disciples of Christ denomination has a strong commitment to that work. Through our General Minister and President, Terri Hord Owens, the Disciples signed onto a 2018 statement titled, "Unity Declaration on Racism and Poverty." That document said:

At its root, racism is in conflict with the opening

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declaration in Genesis 1, that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. Racism literally throws away the biblical principle of imago dei—the image of God in all of us with no exceptions. Racism is a sin against God and all of God’s children. Therefore, the whole counsel of God calls us to preach against the sin of racism from all of our churches’ pulpits and call for repentance.

That passage in Genesis 1 says that God created humans in the divine image, and because each of us is created as an image of God, we ALL deserve love, respect, and the opportunity to live a full life.

How can we at Riverview Park Christian Church help end racism and build up justice in our community? That’s a question worth pondering and acting upon. What do you think?

The early Christian communities were diverse groups of people, from all corners of the world as they knew it. Their radical inclusion of all people was even a scandal to some. Racism and discrimination were incompatible with their faith for these early followers of Jesus’ way, so I’d like to end with this quote from Dr. King:

“We need to recapture the Gospel glow of the early Christians, who were nonconformists in the truest sense of the word and refused to shape their witness according to the mundane patterns of the world. Willingly they sacrificed fame, fortune and life itself on behalf of the cause they knew to be right.”

So much of our world is asking us to conform, to go along with the way things have always been done, especially when it comes to systems of racism and discrimination. May we follow the example of the early Christians and Dr. King in doing what’s right to end racism, spread the all-accepting love of Jesus the Christ, and make sure everyone has a place at the table.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Dan

*You are always welcome to contact me if you'd like to talk about anything -
pastordanrobinson68@gmail.com or 269-588-1163*

Happy Birthday!



Frank Alsup
Shirley Sink

07/13
07/29

INFORMATION FROM YOUR TRUSTEES

The Trustees voted to extend Pastor Dan’s contract another year effective July 1, 2024. In addition to his current Salary and Mileage, they also voted to give him \$500 for Professional Development, and 5% of his salary will go into a Pension Fund.

The congregation approved the 2024/2025 budget effective July 1, 2024. A few line items were eliminated and some reduced. Overall, the budget went up just \$1,700.

*-Kathy Karsten, Eric Lange, Ken Stover.
Alternate, Jim Scholz.*

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION POTLUCK!

Sunday, July 7

Following worship!

Sign up and bring a dish to pass!



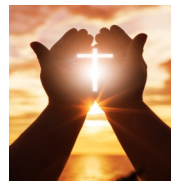
KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH FOR OUR CHURCH

FAMILY: Chris Ashley, Glenn Chapman, Randee Scholz, and Ken Stover.

PRAYERS FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY:

- Chris Ashley’s daughter, Jackie, as she continues to battle cancer.
- Fred Wagoner, June Stover’s brother.
- Tom’s friend, Abe, who has liver disease.
- Continued prayers for Dan's sister-in-law Anna who had surgery.
- For the mother of a co-worker of Tom Brady, who has leukemia and dementia.
- Sheila and Dave’s friend Scott, who has cancer.
- Kay's friend Ted with cancer.
- For Dale's brother Ron, who has lung cancer.
- Continued prayers for Kay's friend Ted who has cancer and only a short time to live.
- Continued prayers for Ukraine, peace in the Middle East, and Haiti.
- In gratitude for:
 - * Kathy's daughter Kelly and her son-in-law visiting, and for her son-in-law's new job.
 - * Kay's dog Ava feeling better.
 - * Jim's friend Dave who is doing better after his car accident.





A TIME FOR GRATITUDE

by [Elena Huegel](#) who serves with the *Intercultural Research and Studies Institute (INESIN)* in Mexico

As a review of my ministry over the last year, in preparation for new workshops and courses ahead, I decided to read the “Gratitude Journal” where we invite participants in the different *Retoños en las ruinas: esperanza en el trauma* (*Roots in the Ruins: Hope in Trauma*) activities to express their thoughts and feelings during and after this personal and community experience. Journaling is one of the basic tools we encourage people to practice as they explore their healing journey. I hope that as you read a few of these brief but heartfelt entries, you will be encouraged to begin your own gratitude journal, either as an individual, a family or church community.

“I just have to say thanks to the Lord for this beautiful gift of hope, faith, kindness and service which came to me at the precise moment I needed it. *Roots in the ruins* has been a treasure for me, something I will cherish but also share with others in service of the Kingdom. I will never forget the hands that accepted and encouraged me and opened my own hands to bless and share God’s love.” *Vitalia Vásquez (Pastor), The Pentecostal Church of Chile, Chile*

“An oasis in the desert, firm ground in my instability, fresh air for my soul... this is what *Roots in the Ruins* has been for me. This path of healing opened up in the midst of chaos, a city literally in ruins after an earthquake. I had no home and was surviving in a shelter, but my hands and heart were ready to serve others, to dream of a new way, to find actions to reconstruct that which had been destroyed. The *Roots in the Ruins* program came to help me rebuild my life and the lives of the members of my church; we have built dreams, hope, plans, and a new sense of community on a firm and healthy foundation. I thank the Institute for Intercultural Study and Research as well as all the sisters and brothers who have supported us and helped us to sprout again from our deep roots still alive in the ruins.” *Noemí Santiago, (Pastor) Church of the Nazarene, Oaxaca, México*

“I give thanks to God, Creator of the earth and the heavens, for this sacred place blessed by the leaves of the willow tree, by the Swiss chard that we eat for breakfast; for the community we are building like a colorful mural, like a coordinated dance. We all have a place, a unique role, where all our grains of sand together become a beautiful beach.” *Lindsey Frye at the Institute for Intercultural Study and Research with the Mennonite Central Committee, Chiapas, México*

“I am especially grateful for the gift that is each partici-

part in this course. The new faces, the little piece of homeland that each of us brings with us, the good humor, the spirit of cooperation, the facilitation team, the songs, the topics. The community life along with the subjects that we studied have made this course pleasant, live-giving and healing. I hope that this space and time will have generated ties that will keep us together as we continue to weave Shalom wherever we are sent.” *Ernesto Martín Guerrero Zavala (Director of the Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research), (Superintendent) El Buen Pastor Church, Chiapas, México.*

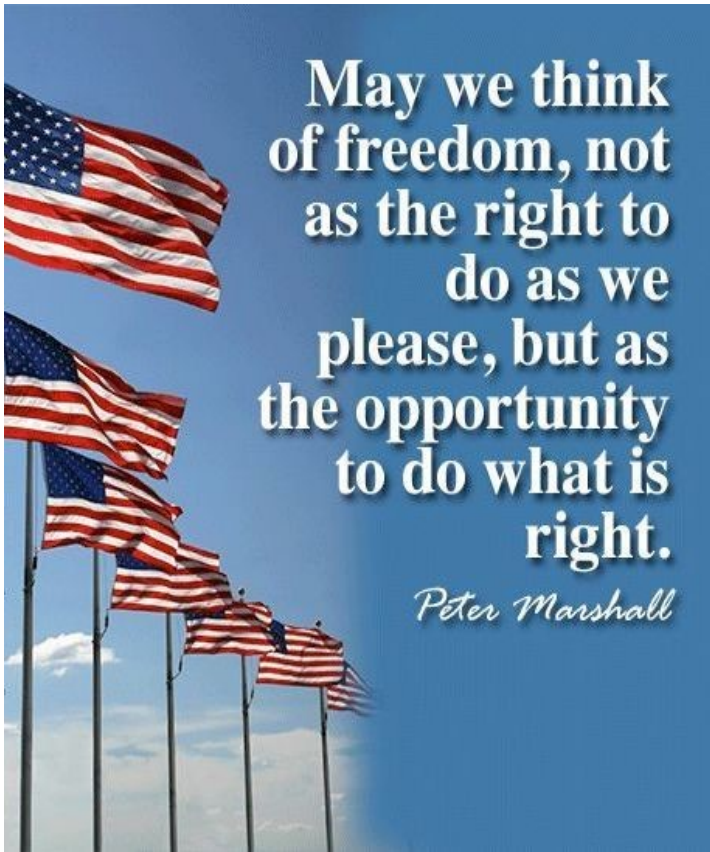
“Sometimes I weep, sometimes I play, and sometimes I only walk, but through it all, I know the Lord is accompanying me in this long journey. Sometimes I know where I am going, but most of the time I don’t; however, I am sure that God prepares me to take the next step. Here where I have faced my emotions and memories, I have become more human with a stronger sense of solidarity. I have been embraced as a child of God, with my virtues and defects, and encouraged to follow in the footsteps of the Teacher. Thanks to every person who made it possible for me to participate in this journey of transformation.” *Claudina Lacayo, The Christian Mission Church of Nicaragua.*



It is with hearts and minds full of gratitude that the facilitators of the *Roots in the Ruins: Hope in Trauma* program and the staff of the Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research begin to plan the activities for 2024. New courses will be taught by trained facilitators in Chile and different parts of Mexico. We are excited as we plan to gather in July for the first time as trained facilitators from Chile, Nicaragua, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Mexico and the US at the Institute for Intercultural Studies and Research in Chiapas, Mexico, to evaluate the program along with several doctoral research students, to share our experiences and update our learning in trauma healing and resilience development. But most of all, to look toward the future with renewed vision of critical hope, healing, and “*lekil kuxlejal*”. (Mayan Tseltal term for the fullness of life with dignity, justice, and peace.)



Elena Huegel serves with the Intercultural Research and Studies Institute (INESIN) in Mexico. Her appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church’s Wider Mission, and your [special gifts](#).



May we think
of freedom, not
as the right to
do as we
please, but as
the opportunity
to do what is
right.

Peter Marshall

★ 4TH OF JULY ★ WORD SEARCH

E	D	U	B	A	R	T	L	L	E	K	G	A	B	M	Y	M	A	E	F
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PATRIOTIC
AMERICAN
CELEBRATION
JULY FOURTH

LIBERTY
PARADE
STRIPES
STARS

BARBECUE
BANNERS
FLAG
PARTY

FIREWORKS
FREEDOM
COOKOUT
SPARKLERS

STAR-SPANGLED
INDEPENDENCE
BRAVERY
BIRTHDAY

CONTACT US! **CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:** T/TH, 8:30-10:30 am **PHONE:** 269-429-0700
WORSHIP: Sun., 10:30am **EMAIL:** riverviewparkchristianchurch@gmail.com

RIVERVIEW PARK CHRISTIAN CHURCH
 2929 Niles Road
 St. Joseph, MI 4985