



Greetings from Riverside!

You have been in our prayers and continue to be in our prayers as our whole nation journeys through this COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of these uncertain times, we have had to make some tough decisions regarding our summer programming (see below for details). Please continue to keep the camp, staff, volunteers, and faithful supporters in your prayers! We place our hope and trust in our great God who is faithful, true, and shows His power over sin and death through the resurrection of Jesus, which we just celebrated this past weekend. We know He has a plan, and we trust that plan will be seen in the months to come. Jesus is alive!

Riverside has been leading Christ-centered camp experiences every summer since 1943. Over those 76 summers, God has used His camp to change the lives of hundreds of thousands of His kids. The past several summers we have continued to see God lead an increasing amount of campers here, along with staff from all over the world, for a fun, engaging, life-changing, Holy Spirit-filled week of camp. There is so much to celebrate and be grateful for, for all that God has done here in this place!

Over the past several weeks, we have paid close attention to the reports of the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updates and guidelines from our governor and from our national leaders. Our state has been directed by federal and state officials to limit gatherings of people in close communities so that we might care for the health and well-being of all people. Our communities have also seen schools move to online education models, congregations gathering for worship, small groups using technology for meetings, and large community events being cancelled/postponed.

Here at Riverside, we have had discussions with local school administrators, local doctors, pastors, parents, and ministry leaders to gain their thoughts, insight, and wisdom in regards to summer camp 2020. All of these conversations have been centered around people and how God is leading us to best love and serve people. The well-being and safety of our staff, campers, families, and communities are our highest priority.

It was our great hope that this current reality wouldn't impact the summer of ministry at Riverside, but we believe the risks are too great. Therefore, based on the information that we have available to us today, the leadership staff and Riverside Board of Directors have made the following decisions:

- Cancellation of all onsite summer youth programs for summer 2020.
- Cancellation of onsite family camp for summer 2020.
- Cancellation of all offsite summer programs, including Day Camps and Adventure Camps.

As difficult as this decision is to make, the heart of this decision is our desire to do what is best for the people and communities we are so blessed to serve. The financial impact of this decision may be great, yet we continue to trust in God's provision through individuals and congregations that have so faithfully given to this ministry for years.

A note to campers— We have been praying and preparing for your week of camp this summer since September of 2019; our prayers for you continue without ceasing! We are so sad to not have the opportunity to experience a Christ-centered, incredibly fun, life-changing week of camp with you this summer. When we think of summer camp, it is the joy of serving you that is such a blessing for us. As you hear this news, know that we feel and experience your sadness with you. Know that God is with you, that He loves you, and that He desires to spend this whole summer (and your whole life!) with you. Be looking for ways to connect with Riverside through technology this summer. Our team is excited to connect with you in some different ways. We look forward to welcoming you here again very soon!

A note to parents— We have been praying for you and your family since September and our prayers continue without ceasing for you. I (Chris) have an eight-year-old son, Joshua, who has been looking forward to his first camp experience all year long. His sadness and pain is real. Take time to listen and be with your kids in their grief. While we recognize your sadness, we also hope that you recognize it is out of an abundance of care for your children, your family, and community that we make this difficult decision. The trust that you place in us is something we do not take for granted.

This is the Lord's camp; it's His. We will continue to follow His lead and seek His will and way as we look toward the future. We fully believe that God will use this time to continue to strengthen the ministry and witness of Riverside for 76 years and more to come! While this might be a pause in some ways, here is what we are doing as we look toward the summer:

- Continuing our mission, "To know Jesus Christ and to make Christ known to all."
- Pursuing and developing new and creative ways to connect with campers, families, and congregations this summer and beyond. Look for more information on this to come!
- Looking at what smaller retreats we may be able to offer during the summer that are in compliance with government recommendations.
- Working with our Ranch Team to develop individual and small group riding lessons programs throughout the summer with safety protocols in place.
- Open to small church groups or families for retreats with certain cleaning and safety protocols.
- Using this time and space to be good stewards of the Lord's resources and making enhancements to His camp for the future.
- Continuing to pray for you and with you.

Many of you have already paid registration fees for this summer. For this summer only, we have changed our refund/transfer policy. We ask you to consider the following options:

1. Donate full or partial amount to the ministry of Riverside. While your child might not be attending camp, the Christ-centered ministry of Riverside continues. The revenue provided through summer camp accounts for almost 50% of our annual operating

income for the entire year of ministry. Your giving helps us continue this ministry with our great year around ministry team and using this unforeseen time to make many enhancements to the grounds and facilities for excellent camp experiences in the future.

2. Transfer your fees to a Fall Recharge or Summer 2021. Transfer your balance to register for a Fall Recharge weekend in 2020 or to a Summer 2021 week of your choice.
3. Receive a full refund. You will receive a full refund back on your card or via paper check.

\* Please send an email to [summer@riversidelbc.org](mailto:summer@riversidelbc.org) with your decision.\*

We are so thankful for your continued partnership in the Gospel. As we continue to pray for you, we ask that you continue to pray for the ministry of Riverside.

God bless you,

  
Chris Dahl  
Executive Director

  
Jon Anenson  
President, Riverside Board of Directors

