



---

## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 19, 2020

---

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- [A Note from Pastor Dave](#)
- [Elder Update](#)
- [RVC I kids](#)
- [Prayer and Praise](#)
- [Dedication](#)
- [Operation Christmas Child Thank you](#)
- [Giving Update](#)

---

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR DAVE

### ENCOURAGEMENT

1 Cor. 14:1-5

*“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may **prophesy**. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their **upbuilding and encouragement**”*

*even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, **so that the church may be built up.***"

A lot of people have different definitions of prophesying. Some think it's taking a scripture and finding things that are like it and proclaiming "This is that" or, more honestly, "This looks like that" and often isn't. When I was a kid, I listened to prophecy records. Yes, I said "records" -- vinyl discs long before digital files. (Sorry, I got lost there for a second.) The speaker (the prophet) described things in the book of Revelation by saying things like "This scorpion thing is this helicopter" now decommissioned, I might add. I'm not speaking of prophecy as looking for things that might be like something mentioned in the Scriptures.

I'm also not talking about the position of a biblical prophet who can't ever be wrong. The Greek word propheteuo, (προφητεύω), used in 1 Corinthians 14, is a word that means **to speak inspired utterances or speaking forth from God**. If Paul was asking us to be positional prophets, that would mean speaking like Daniel did when he explained that the image he saw of a king was a vision of what is going to happen in the future. In 1 Corinthians 14, I am convinced that Paul is speaking of the spiritual gift of prophecy, which he says we should all especially seek. He also tells us why. He says it is because this gift builds up the Church. More specifically, he says that it is used for the upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation of Christ's body.

We need this gift NOW! The Church is a little scattered right now. Some of the body is sheltering at home, while other parts are gathering together in smaller-than-usual groups. The spiritual gift of prophecy is where the Holy Spirit inspires us to encourage each other. Not like "I was inspired to write this song about my truck, dog and gun" or, more likely, "a beer". It means that the Holy Spirit prompted you to think of another person and send them a specific, encouraging word. Paul says, particularly, that he wishes we'd all use the spiritual gift of prophecy because it will build up the Church.

Do you get discouraged easily these days? Most of us do. The term "discouraged" is the opposite of "encouraged". When we are discouraged, we start to think about giving up -- giving up on hope or giving up on trying or giving up on believing. The reason crowds line the sidewalks of marathons for runners is because the long journey gets discouraging. Someone shouting, "You can make it!" or "You're doing

As the pandemic drags on and the toll of isolation makes many feel lonely and forgotten, what are we to do? It seems to me that the spiritual gift of prophecy should be kicking into high gear right now. When the Holy Spirit prompts you to send a note, a card, or an email, DO IT! Don't hesitate. If the Holy Spirit puts someone's name in your mind, then ask God how to address the prompt. What if you were wrong and it wasn't the Holy Spirit but it was just you thinking maybe God wanted you to encourage someone? Well, that would be OK, too, wouldn't it?

We need encouragement. We need building up. And sometimes we need to be consoled. Even if the church is physically separated for this short time, the spiritual gift of prophecy should be working overtime. So here's the challenge if you are willing to take it on: Ask God to use you to speak encouragement, upbuilding, and consolation into others through you.

### The Challenge

1. Ask God to give you a word of encouragement for someone in the body of Christ every week or even every day. Then follow through on sharing that word.
2. If God uses you in a way that blesses you, let me know about it.

We need each other right now. We need to speak the encouraging words from the Lord.

[Back to top](#)

---

## ELDER UPDATE

### Elder Position on Coronavirus - October 9, 2020

The elders at RiverValley Church believe that the assembling together as the body of Christ is essential to life and growth. Therefore, staying open for services is a high priority. We also believe God calls us to respect our authorities, so it will be our plan to follow the current mandates given by our government, as much as possible without compromising biblical commands and as long as religious groups are not being singled out for limitations. Present guidelines include urging everyone to wear a mask unless speaking from the front. Conditions may also lead us to move to online-only services, if necessary, but it would be only a short time and only as

dictate our path. We will honor your decision to attend or not attend in-person during the pandemic.

### **Elder position on Coronavirus – November 11, 2020**

The elders at RiverValley are committed to evaluate and respond to COVID-19 as things continue to change here in Oshkosh and surrounding areas. Because the virus is spiking here and the hospitals are full, we are going to change from encouraging mask wearing to requiring masks to be worn for participation in Sunday services starting on November 22nd.

#### **We are committed to meeting together for a number of reasons:**

*“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:23-25*

- **We are called in scripture not to forsake meeting together. (Heb.10:25)** In a culture that is completely me-centric these teachings may feel strange, but we are called to be engaged with one another. We are called to encourage one another to consider how we can call each other to love and good work. The commitment is to one another, not to watch a video once a week. We believe the constant isolation is very hard on many people. We also believe that Satan loves to separate believers from the herd in order to attack them.
- **We believe that gathering as the church body is essential, and that God’s place is first in everything.** The Old Testament reminds us that God is always first. Whether that is the first fruits of your garden, the first of your flocks, etc. We believe that our commitment to Christ and His body is first above other activities. One RVC’er said it well, “We aren’t going to a restaurant if we aren’t going to church.”
- **We don’t believe the church shuts down ever.** Even though there is a pandemic, that doesn’t mean that the believers left here to live for God’s glory put that on hold for a year or so. We need to be on mission right now, wherever you are. If anything, the fact that some people die from this virus must call us to proclaim Christ. Being part of a local assembly is a great support and help in that.

**We are going to require masks right now to slow the spread and show love for one another.**

to you, “This is meat sacrificed to idols,” do not eat it, for the sake of that one who informed you and for the sake of conscience; Now by “conscience” I do not mean your own, but the other person’s; for why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience?” 1 Corinthians 10:27-29

- **We are going to require masks, because we want to do our best to protect people from getting the virus.** We know that the efficacy of masks has been questioned, but the vast majority of experts believe it has some benefits to slow the transmission of the virus. So regardless of the science that we don’t know, we can show our concern for others by doing what is thought to be the best deterrent.
- **We are going to require masks, because it is a way to show love for others.** The purpose of masks isn’t to protect yourself but to protect those around you. Therefore, wearing a mask helps those around you feel safer. Paul was willing to give up his freedom for the sake of others. New Testament scholar I. Howard Marshall once said, “Paul was so free that he was never in bondage to his emancipation.” You are free to believe that masks don’t help or that it’s an intrusion on your rights. However, it is important to remember that as Christians, we hold our personal rights loosely to show God’s love by giving up personal freedom for the sake of others’ concern.
- **Make your stand for the gospel, not your preferences.** Paul says, “*For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more.*” The principle of not holding on to preferences so that you can win others to Christ is very biblical. We are not controlled by what others think, but right now some people perceive the freedom not to wear a mask with indifference to others getting sick. That’s a message we don’t need to perpetuate.
- **Wearing a mask here does not mean we are asking you to believe the whole COVID-19 narrative.** We know that some of you do not want to wear a mask, because you disagree with the narrative portrayed by the media. We know that a mask is not capable of keeping the microscopic virus out. However, a mask absolutely does alter the trajectory of your exhaled pathogens, especially when we sing.
- **It is not our intention to wear masks forever.** We will evaluate our condition here month by month. When we do not require masks anymore, there will need to be graciousness from those who want to continue wearing masks to those that do not.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

have questions, need further clarification, or possibly have some disagreements. Feel free to email or talk in person to any of the elders, Pastor Dave, or Pastor Wyatt.

[Back to top](#)

---

## RVC | kids

We are less than a week away from Thanksgiving!

I try to make it a daily routine to give thanks to the LORD, whether in the morning (when everything seems fresh and new) or in the evening (which isn't always easy because I am exhausted by 8:00 p.m.)! It might just be all I can do with heavy eyes to blurt out "thank you for my pillow and the roof over my head". I would encourage you to be deliberate about your thankfulness to God, not just the meal, but what is in your heart. What are you truly thankful for? I mean, truly.

I am truly thankful for children, even those challenging children who deliberately know how to get your nostrils flaring, those children you know God has put in your path because you are patient and kind and you want to truly see them succeed (and possibly work on your own patience, as well). You see, children watch you. They look up to you. Whether you are a mom or dad, grandma or grandpa, aunt or uncle. Even if you are not a parent, children are all around you. Children are a blessing from God. And you are a child of God, a blessing! Take time to thank your Heavenly Father for calling you one of His own. Seek the Holy Spirit and ask how you might make a difference in the life of a child.

Scripture to meditate on: Ephesians 1:5, Luke 18:15-17, John 1:12, Psalm 34:11

[Back to top](#)

# Thankful

## Psalm 100:4

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!  
Give thanks to him; bless his name!”

*Our next Prayer and Praise is on Sunday, November 29.*

**COME PREPARED TO SHARE THANKS FOR SOMETHING GOD HAS DONE THIS YEAR.**

[Back to top](#)

---

## DEDICATION

This Sunday we will joyfully celebrate the dedication to God of Lillian Anna Belton and her parents (Alyssa and Jordan).

[Back to top](#)

---

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thank you to all who took part in Operation Christmas Child. We collected 115 shoeboxes, and 9 shoeboxes were built using the RVC on-line link. Your generosity will help bring Christmas cheer and, more importantly, the gospel to children in need of both this Christmas.

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼

## GIVING UPDATE:

### YTD Giving 5/1/20 - 7/31/20

Actual: \$179,738.68

Budgeted: \$173,732

### Weekly Giving: 11/9/20 - 11/15/20

\$9,274.35

---

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

*Copyright © 2020 RiverValley Church, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

