

An Update from Your Church Council

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During the past few months we have all been impacted by COVID-19. It has been easy to feel alone, isolated, disconnected, and even lost. As a church, we have not been able to gather in person to worship, celebrate, or mourn. Yet God continues to bring us together and reminds us that we are never alone. While our doors have been closed since mid-March, our church has remained strong, faithful, vital, and connected.

Church Beyond Our Walls

Reveille's staff has worked diligently during this time, partnering with congregational leaders to move our ministries to online platforms, create new virtual ministry opportunities, help members stay in touch, support our community, and prepare for the time when our doors can reopen. Here are just a few examples of how our ministries have adapted and continued:

- Online worship has evolved from recorded sermon audio to a full video service. We continue to adapt and introduce new features to worship, such as the recent launch of the condensed version of the service on Facebook and the virtual Chancel Choir project.
- Small groups and Sunday school classes for all ages have continued to meet via Zoom.
- We are supporting homebound members, keeping in touch by phone and mail.
- New online opportunities such as The Psalms Study and the Blessing of the Pets have engaged church members and the community.
- Our congregation continues to provide meals for Friends of the Homeless, and we recently partnered with Better2Gether RVA to be a meal distribution site for families of children facing serious illnesses.
- Through our continuing partnership with ACTS (Area Congregations Together in Service), we support neighbors in financial crisis with funds, support, and other resources.
- The Weekday School has provided lessons and materials for families and students to use at home, plus online experiences such as music, chapel, and weekly story time.
- We are preparing to offer Kids Camp and Vacation Bible School online through videos, Zoom meetings, and at-home activities.
- Our facilities team has been cleaning and sanitizing all areas of the church thoroughly so we are prepared when we are able to reopen, as well as performing needed maintenance and repairs.

Financial Uncertainty

We know that many of you have experienced financial consequences due to the pandemic. Our church has also experienced financial uncertainty. While Reveille is blessed by a generous congregation, our recurring weekly offerings have been irregular since the beginning of March and we expect this to continue for some time.

To minimize the impact of this economic uncertainty, the church and the Reveille Weekday School applied and were approved for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan. This loan, made through the Small Business Administration in the amount of 2.5 times monthly payroll, is forgivable and in effect becomes a grant when used to cover payroll and other approved expenses, such as utilities, during the eight-week period after the date the loan is dispersed.

Churches were strongly encouraged to apply for a PPP loan by both Virginia Annual Conference and Richmond District leadership. Reveille's leadership did not take applying for the loan lightly; the Board of Trustees approved seeking the loan, and Church Council met in a special session in early April to discuss applying for a loan. The Council approved applying for the loan after determining that the funds were necessary to support the ongoing operations of the church. Key factors in this decision were:

- lower than expected giving in March;
- ensuring that all staff could be retained with no reduction in pay;
- uncertainty about the long-term impact of COVID-19 on the church's finances and day-to-day operations; and
- the effect of market volatility on future giving and Reveille's endowment.

The leadership of the Reveille Weekday School also concluded that the loan was needed to support ongoing operations and fulfill their commitment to pay their teachers through the end of the school year while issuing partial tuition refunds to families of students.

The loan funds will help Reveille continue to operate and support our congregation and community, both now and into the future.

Our Financial Future

The church is in the first year of a three-year plan to reach a balanced budget. For the 2020 budget, ministry leaders and staff did the difficult work required to reduce spending and find new ways of raising funds to lower a projected \$350,000 deficit to a planned deficit of \$150,000. Our goal is to reach a balanced budget by 2022. In 2020 and 2021, deficits will be covered from the remaining balance of a 2015 special anonymous gift, intended by the donor to be spent for transformative initiatives as discerned and directed by Church Council. This limited resource will also provide vital funding to benefit the children and families of Swansboro Elementary School (see "A Caring Community" below for more about this initiative) and other transformative ministries in the future.

A portion of our budget is funded through prudent draws on Reveille's endowment. The endowment is designed to grow over time in pace with inflation, allowing the church to use annual income to fund ministries and operations. These funds were given by people who are no longer with us who loved Reveille. As stewards of their legacy, we should not risk depleting this dependable source of annual income for future generations.

Reveille relies mainly on financial support from congregation members to fund continuing operations. Thank you for giving, particularly during these challenging times. Please continue to support the church as you are able. Your consistent, recurring giving is critical to fulfilling our mission and ministry.

A Caring Community

Reveille is committed to caring for our congregation and our community. We have aligned our resources to reflect that commitment.

We will continue to minister to the members of our congregation to provide spiritual and emotional support as well as financial support through our Congregational Care designated fund and a new COVID-19 relief program. If you are in need, please contact Doug, Stephen, or Kelley. More information about the relief program will be shared soon.

Here are a few of the ways our ministries will continue to bless our community and world:

- While our Honduras medical mission was canceled this summer due to the pandemic and travel restrictions, we are donating budgeted funds to Friends of Barnabas to support their ongoing work with the mountain communities in Honduras.
- We will provide support to Westview on the James camp as budgeted even if we are unable to send our 25 Swansboro Elementary students to the camp as planned.
- The UMFS prom that Reveille normally supports was cancelled. The funds allocated for the prom are being used to support UMFS graduating students in other ways.
- In March, the Church Council approved extending Reveille's partnership with Communities in Schools (CIS), which was scheduled to end in June 2021, for an additional three years through June 2024. An allocation from the 2015 gift of \$120,000 over three years will allow Swansboro Elementary to have a full-time CIS coordinator, enabling many more children and families to benefit from the program and creating more opportunities for Reveille members to be engaged at the school. To learn more about CIS, visit www.reveilleumc.org/swansboro.

Reopening

On May 13, the Virginia Annual Conference released its plan for resuming in-person worship. Plan information and resources can be found at <https://vaumc.org/return/>.

Reveille is forming its Healthy Church Team to plan and prepare for reopening. Look for information about our reopening plan in the near future.

We are a people of hope. That hope gives us the strength to face anxiety and uncertainty, knowing that we will prevail.

We look forward to the time when we can again gather to worship, grow, and serve in person together.

Grace and peace,

Your Church Council

Rich Schweiker, Emma Bruny, Andrew Bullock, Stephen Coleman, Allen Davis, Dick Davis, Steve Fisher, Doug Forrester, Linda Gill, Claire Kaugars, Laura Lay, Heather Lockerman, Randy Manspile, Maureen McKay, David Simonsen, Vickey Verwey, Pete Watson, Linda White

SIDEBARS/ADDITIONAL INFO

Ways to Give

Visit www.reveilleumc.org/donate

Use your bank's bill pay feature

Mail your check to the church

Care & Support

Please feel free to contact our clergy at any time for pastoral care and support:

Rev. Doug Forrester, (804) 814-0543 or leadpastor@reveilleumc.org

Rev. Stephen Coleman, (804) 380-8668 or associatepastor@reveilleumc.org

Rev. Kelley Lane, (804) 389-0879 or adultministries@reveilleumc.org

Visit www.reveilleumc.org/care for support groups and other resources.

Questions?

In addition to our clergy, you may contact:

Rich Schweiker, Church Council Chair, dukeschweikers@aol.com

David Simonsen, Board of Trustees Chair, dsimonsenj@aol.com

Steve Fisher, Finance Committee Chair, steve.fisher@vamlc.com