

My Sisters and Brothers in Port Byron:

I first want to thank you all for letting me go and volunteer at camp this past week. It is always such a powerful experience, and they are always so grateful for having us there. That's not to say I don't appreciate being back in the air conditioning and no longer smelling like the lake. I've always felt like one of the most powerful aspects of camping ministry is that these kids are removed from their daily lives and normal peers and are given a chance to redefine themselves. More than that it's a place where kids can experience what the world should feel like. What it looks like when people come together and try to live the way God calls us too. To treat one another the way God wants us too. This can be particularly powerful for those who don't receive this kind of love and care at home.

While I at least hope I was able to have this kind of positive impact on the campers this year what I didn't realize was how impactful this time away was going to be for me this year. While I don't feel this move could have gone much better, especially on this end, that really just means it was a certain level of organized chaos. I mean even with two trips to Chadwick I still don't even have an Illinois license yet. That's the thing with the logistics of moving 6 people from one state to another with a new church and new schools, my life has been filled with many practical concerns lately. I didn't realize how much I was letting the everyday interfere with the eternal until I was able to let all of that take a back burner and focus on God for a while. To have a week, where my primary concern every day was to sit with a piece of scripture and let it speak to me as I came to the best way to share it with the campers. To have time just to sit in silence surrounded by God's creation. Trust me silence is a rare commodity when you have a two-year-old at home. This week was truly restorative for me. While I know school is starting next week the summer isn't over yet and if you have yet found an opportunity like this. To find time to dedicate solely to your relationship with God to sit silently and let Creation speak to you. I implore you to make this time maybe it can't be a week for you maybe it's an afternoon or a few hours a day in the next few weeks. Find the time for what's truly important don't let what the world would deem urgent drown out what is eternally important.

### ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

**If you would like to schedule an event at the church, contact Steph at 309-848-4050 or [portbyronfirstumc@gmail.com](mailto:portbyronfirstumc@gmail.com). She will provide you with**

the building agreement, policies, and forms to book the date on the church calendar.

**MONTHLY DONATIONS BLESSED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: *Immediate Food Pantry Needs*** - The Upper Rock Island County Food Pantry at Messiah Lutheran Church has immediate needs for paper products: Paper towels, kleenex, toilet paper & laundry detergent. Also, salad dressing, boxed meals, spaghetti, ravioli, pancake mix and syrup. *Be sure that your donations are within the "best by/best use" expiration date and that the item has not been opened. The food pantry cannot accept items that are expired.* Thank you for your continuing support of this ministry!

**MONTHLY DONATIONS BLESSED ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: *Wish List for the Mission Welcome Kits***: The Mission Committee is preparing ongoing Welcome Kits for new residents at Whispering Hills. The following items are needed: shampoo, body soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, dish soap, small laundry detergent, cleaning wipes, small all-purpose cleaner, single-roll paper towels, and a 4-pack of toilet paper. Thank you for your donations and support of this local mission!

Now that we are getting back into the full swing of things we would like to invite everyone to join Kathy and myself in a series of listening tours. This is a chance for me to get to know all of you a little better and for us to talk about our vision for our shared ministry here in Port Byron. We are currently scheduling four of these meetings: Monday, Aug. 18th at 10am, Friday, Aug. 22nd at 1 pm, Sunday, Aug. 24th at 2pm and Wednesday, Sept. 3rd at 7pm. There will be a sign up sheet in the back and if these prove popular enough we will add more dates.

**Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>** – Riverdale 1<sup>st</sup> Day of School