



“The Word by Whom all time was created, was made flesh and was born in time for us. The Maker became human that the Ruler of the stars, might be held in human hands; that the Bread of Life, might hunger; the Fountain, might thirst; the Light, might sleep; the Way, might be wearied by the journey; the Truth, might be accused by false witnesses; the Judge of the living and the dead, might be condemned by the unjust...” (Augustine of Hippo 354-430)



At Christmas, we celebrate the arrival of God into the world: the Word of God made flesh and dwelling among us. This month, we pause to consider what a difference this makes. Why it really matters.

This month, as we delve into the mystery of the incarnation (the mystery of God becoming real in the world), we'll uncover the power of embodying our faith and seeking that which is true and right and good—even if it means breaking through our own self deceptions or moving our weary feet to bring a cup of water to someone else who is weary and thirsty, too.

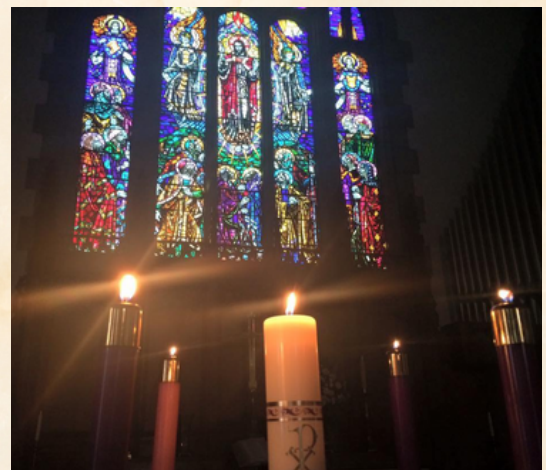
This message feels timely for a world filtered by social media and internet scammers, where it can be challenging to discern what is genuine. (Speaking of scams, please know that I will NEVER ask you to purchase gifts cards for me—a few churches have been targeted by this scam). This feels timely for a world hungry for authenticity and genuine connection. We need this from each other.

We need it from God.

And if we, the church, are the body of Christ in the world, then God needs us to be real about our witness and the genuine character that we need to carry with us.

As we trace the footsteps of Christ this year, I invite you to open yourself to a simple but rich prayer: “Lord Jesus, show me your grace and love—make it real in me. Amen.”

Rev. Emily Knight



Thank you to all of you who offered up your time and gifts to help celebrate a meaningful Advent and Christmas season!



In 2023, our church served 7,955 free meals to the community

*some with cards or crafts made by kids
—like these shown below. This number doesn't include
additional meals sent to Family Promise or lunches for
seniors served during First Friday Friends.*



"It is the highlight of my week to join with others and serving the community on Wednesday nights. This family that we have assembled is to me one of the greatest groups I've ever worked with and it's a blessing and a pleasure to come out and serve on Wednesday nights. There is a mutual feeling of love and outreach that permeates throughout the group that exemplifies the commandment of our Lord to 'Love one another as I have loved you.' " **This is my soul's recharge between Sunday services. Thank you RPUMC."** —David Bowman , church member



**Our total
attendance
for Christmas Eve
worship was 339.**



**In 2023,
we welcomed
53 new members.**



**In 2023,
we celebrated
7 baptisms.**

FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS – JANUARY 5TH



Do you remember the board games you played as a kid? This month we are going to fall back in time by enjoying some of the games we used to play.

We have Monopoly, Dominoes, Uno, Bunco, Bingo, Yahtzee, card games, and others you may remember. If you have other suggestions please contact Susan Russell. [Contact the church office at (904) 355-5491 for her contact info.] We will try to get what we need. Susan Bush is ready to help us remember the games.

Come at 11:00 to chat and enjoy a cup of coffee before we play games from the past.

MARGARET'S MEMORIES BRACELET MAKING JANUARY 21ST

Feeling crafty? Stop by the Rhames Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 21st and make bracelets for the Margaret's Memories' bereavement boxes. Drop-in anytime between 10 a.m. & 12 p.m. Materials will be provided.



MINISTRY FAIR

Come and find a place to serve!

The church council is sponsoring a Ministry Fair in Rhames Fellowship Hall from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Come after the 9:00 worship service or before Sunday school and/or 11:00 worship and see all the various ministries and missions of RPUMC.

2024 is a perfect opportunity to join a new committee and participate in one or more missions that serve the congregation, surrounding neighborhoods and the greater Jacksonville community. Coming together to work on a project, attend a Sunday school class or prayer group is the ideal way to make new friends and integrate more fully into the congregation. We welcome you with open arms and coffee and treats will be served.

JANUARY 28TH

TAOIST TAI CHI® INTRO SESSION – JANUARY 9TH



MORNINGS 10:30-11:30AM or EVENINGS 7:00-8:00PM
Rhames Fellowship Hall

The Taoist Tai Chi Society® internal arts and methods incorporate stretching and turning into a sequence of 108 movements that reduce tension, improve circulation and balance, and increase strength and flexibility. This first class will provide background information, a demonstration and learning the first 4 moves of the Taoist Tai Chi® 108 movement set. Classes will continue every Tuesday morning 10:30-11:30am & evenings 7-8pm through March 28th

For additional information: jacksonville.fl@taoisttaichi.org or contact Linda LaBell [Call the church office at (904) 355-5491 for her contact information.]

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MINISTRIES

As we close the door on the old year and sing Auld Lang Syne, the new year opens in us feelings of new beginnings, a perfect time to have a Ministry Fair to inform us all of all the possibilities we have here at Riverside Park to connect with each other, to serve our community, and to share our gifts. Wednesday Night Ministry is one of many “ways to plug-in” so please put January 28 on your new 2024 calendar and visit us at the Ministry Fair.

--Bonnie Dudley

ITEMS NEEDED



ANTI-RACISM TEAM

The Anti-Racism team invites you to participate in the following events:

Intro to Racial Discussions Parts 1 & 2

Talking about race and/or racism is difficult for all of us. Learn how to conduct these conversations and sharpen your skills by attending:

Date & Time

- Jan 23, 2024 06:00 PM-8 PM
- Jan 30, 2024 06:00 PM-8 PM

For more information and to register go to:
904ward.org/events

THE AMANDA BETHANY STRONG MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Remembrance is sacred work—especially when it turns outward to bless and empowers others in the name of Christ. Thus we are honored to announce the creation of the Amanda Bethany Strong Memorial Scholarship. Amanda Bethany Strong was called to enter heaven after only six months in the womb, so in the spirit of Isaiah 61 (which promises beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for all who mourn) Amanda's parents wanted to celebrate her life through an act of blessing for others.

"As parents, we know that her life, if continued on Earth, would have been beautiful, vibrant, and strong in Christ. We wish to continue that memory with a scholarship in memory of our daughter through those parents whose child receives this scholarship."

~Ty and Colleen Strong

The Amanda Bethany Strong Memorial Scholarship will be awarded to a Riverside United Methodist student who plans to attend or attends an accredited college, university, or trade school. Applications will be available Jan. 24th and are due Feb. 17th. Contact the church office.

RPUMC Leaders for 2024

Our church is blessed with dedicated and servant-hearted leaders, both in official roles and in quieter, unnamed capacities. As we embark on a new year, we express our gratitude and to each of these persons who share their gifts “to build up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).

We especially extend our thanks and appreciation to those who have served in leadership positions for their due season and are now stepping back, allowing others to bring their gifts forward. We thank Robby Monk, Carly Gunby, Alma Quails, and Chuck Pickren who roll off of administrative committees. We also celebrate the ministry leadership of Bonnie Allen (Women in Mission), John Larsen (Outreach), Clark Burner (UMM), Jeff Cornett (Finance/SPRC chair), and Kaitlyn Fuller (young adults). These leaders have led ministry areas and served on Church Council. Well done and thank you!

As we honor those who have served, we also welcome new leaders into their roles. We pray for and give thanks to Bill Hodges (chair of SPRC/Finance), Rich Goodwin (Finance/SPRC), Frank Morreale, Jonathan Smith, and Marc Julia (Trustees members), Jesse Manalo (Vice Chair of Church Council), Timothy Keatley (young adult coordinator), David Morcom (United Methodist Men), and Kevin Round (Spiritual Growth and Christian Education) for their willingness to serve and lead us into the next year.



ACORN TO OAK CHALLENGE

Now through January 28th

The RPUMC Youth are trading acorns for something bigger and better. Join them in their quest to discover growth from a single acorn.



The youth room is named after a young gentleman who was taken at the young age of 18 in 2002. He said if he was a tree he would have been an Oak. In this spirit the youth have come up with the James Pickren: Acorn to Oak Tree Challenge

James 3:4 - Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

The challenge is to see an acorn grow into an oak tree (or something bigger in this case).

How the challenge works: Join us as we exchange things with all kinds of people in our quest to discover growth from a single acorn.

Challenge OBJECTIVE(S): The game begins with a small acorn offered for a bigger or better item. The cycle continues until no further trades can occur or until January 28th (the end of the challenge). When trading has stopped, the item is sold or donated at the youth group's discretion.

For more information, contact Ty Strong at Youth@RiversideParkUMC.com



In December, our youth assembled gift baskets and cards for each person on RPUMC's homebound list. These were blessed in worship and delivered with certificates making each person an "honorary member of the youth group." Special thanks to Ty Strong, Tim Bush, and JoAnn Goodwin for delivering them with love. Shown here are some of the recipients: Gordon Rehberg, MaryLou Roberts, and Emory Cook.





RIVERSIDE PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Empowering others to live life abundantly in Christ."



Worship with Us!



**Sunday Mornings
in the Sanctuary:
@9am Contemporary
@11am Traditional**

**Nursery care available
Sunday school @10am**

**Worship Online:
Facebook & YouTube Live
Sundays
@9am Contemporary
@11am Traditional**

**facebook.com/RiversideParkUMC
tinyurl.com/YouTube-RPUMC**

Church Office: (904) 355-5491

www.riversideparkumc.com

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9-3:30

Friday 9-1

Rev. Emily Knight, Pastor
pastoremily@riversideparkumc.com

Joye Hampton, Office Manager
j.hampton@riversideparkumc.com

John Larsen, Director of Traditional Worship
j.larsen@riversideparkumc.com

Millie Hudson, Director of Contemporary Worship
m.hudson@riversideparkumc.com

Ty Strong, Youth Leader
youth@riversideparkumc.com

Rich Lewis, Organist
r.lewis@riversideparkumc.com

Jack Barnard, Bookkeeper
j.barnard@riversideparkumc.com

Britt Scott, Tech Team Leader
tech@riversideparkumc.com

Nancy Schubiger, Membership Secretary
membership@riversideparkumc.com

Tre Devine, Custodian
t.devine@riversideparkumc.com

Jacksonville, FL 32204

819 Park Street

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

RIVERSIDE PARK



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All worship services will be in-person and streamed live on Facebook and YouTube. Please check the website or the RPUMC Family group on Facebook for any updates. Worship service videos will be posted on the church website the following business day.



Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 9 am—3:30 pm
Friday 9 am—1 pm

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|--|---|--|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | 1 NEW YEARS DAY HOLIDAY— Office Closed | 2 | 3 3 pm Yoga 5:30 pm Free Dinners 6 pm Praise Team 7:30 pm Chancel Choir | 4 | 5 11 am First Friday Friends | 6 11 am Family Ministry Picnic |
| 7 COMMUNION 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers | 8 | 9 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 6 pm SPR/Finance 7 pm Sisters of Service 7 pm Tai Chi | 10 3 pm Yoga 5:30 pm Free Dinners 6 pm Praise Team 7:30 pm Chancel Choir | 11 11 am Circle of Hope | 12 | 13 |
| 14 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers | 15 MLK, JR. DAY Holiday—Office Closed 6 pm Board of Trustees | 16 10:30 am Tai Chi 6 pm Church Council 7 pm Tai Chi | 17 11:00 am Circle of Joy & Peace 3 pm Yoga 5:30 pm Free Dinners 6 pm Praise Team 7:30 pm Chancel Choir | 18 | 19 | 20 11 am Church Council Retreat |
| 21 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 10 am Margaret's Memories Bracelet Making 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers | 22 | 23 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Tai Chi | 24 3 pm Yoga 5:30 pm Free Dinners 6 pm Praise Team 7:30 pm Chancel Choir | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 9 am Contemporary Worship 9:30 am Ministry Fair 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers | 29 | 30 10:30 am Tai Chi 7 pm Tai Chi | 31 3 pm Yoga 5:30 pm Free Dinners 6 pm Praise Team 7:30 pm Chancel Choir | | | |



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|------|--|
| 1st | Barbara Hittell |
| 2nd | Justin Wilson |
| 8th | Susan Ridge |
| 9th | Kim Moseley Luke Renne Bob Soper |
| 10th | Alden Haupt |
| 12th | Nora Riechmann |
| 16th | Cathy Parker |
| 18th | Jim Lewis |
| 20th | Tadd Manning |
| 21st | Lee Cashman Red Earp Robin Lee |
| 22nd | Kaitlyn Fuller Rich Goodwin |
| 23rd | Owen Lek Henry Lek |
| 25th | Chris Schmitz |
| 27th | Emily Charleton |
| 28th | Ron Rehberg |
| 29th | Shirley Davis |
| 31st | Andy Scully |

Committee Meetings:

Finance/SPR Committee
Tuesday, January 9th at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees
Monday, January 15th at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council
Tuesday, January 16th at 6:00 p.m.

If we miss your birthday,
please let us know.

If you move, please let us know.

Do you get our newsletter in the
mail? How about the weekly RPUMC
Updates sent by email on Fridays?

Call the church office at
(904) 355-5491
to update your information.

May God's love surround...

Home

† Emory Cook
† Ted DiSalvo
† Joe Dorsie
† Shirley Early
† Jo Herron
† Steven Jarvis
† Carol Stelly
† Jim Todd
† Gordon Rehberg
† Mary Lou Roberts

College Students

- Cooper Crowell
- Frankie Crowell
- Tre Devine
- Brenna DuPries
- Isabella Laffy
- Hogan Litwin
- Emily Matthews
- Kaden Neufeld
- Kyle Neufeld
- Emily Popp
- Matthew Popp
- Dallas Renne

