

RIVERSIDE REPORTER

DECEMBER 2024
(ADVENT EDITION)

STILL



The *hope* of December is that our focus will stay centered on Christ. The reality is that this season can get VERY busy. VERY quickly.

So here is your invitation to step into a different rhythm for Advent: a rhythm of stillness, reflection, and hopeful anticipation (even if it's just a few minutes or breaths each day). Advent IS a time to pause, to quiet our souls, and to remember God's promises that have been spoken through the ages.

Advent as a season of waiting—waiting in stillness for the coming of Christ and waiting in prophetic expectation for the fulfillment of God's promises. Just as God's people once waited with longing for a Savior, we too wait for the low to be lifted and the wrongs to be made right. We wait for peace to end wars and for grieving hearts to be comforted. We still hope, we still long, we still wait—for God to move, for God to answer, for salvation to settle upon all of creation.

And in our waiting (especially if we turn to the prophets) we are reminded that God listened then and that God listens to us still. God's promise remains unshaken by time and God's love endures for all generations.

We invite you to join us this Advent as we embrace the stillness, renew our hope, and listen for God's voice in this sacred season of waiting. Come, and prepare your heart for the coming of Christ.

Rev. Emily Knight

STILL....



RETIRING AFTER 37 YEARS OF SERVICE: Richard John “Jack” Barnard

“It was fun all along! I liked doing it and I liked the people.”
~Jack Barnard



As our church's bookkeeper, Jack has brought 37 years of dedication, integrity, and good humor to the RPUMC office. We miss him around the office, but Jack's retirement is definitely well earned!

Where did you go to high school? *Wadsworth Ohio High School (1958)*

What brought you to Jacksonville? *My wife, Judy, and I moved to Jacksonville in 1987. Her friend's husband needed help with his company.*

What brought you to RPUMC? *I worked for Maddox tax returns and the new owner was the church's previous bookkeeper, so he encouraged me to apply.*

What will you miss about the job? *The people. The people here have been good to me--even though I know some of you only as a name. When my wife passed away in 2011, everyone was supportive and my family is grateful.*

What are you proud to leave behind? *When I first started, my 'office' was just a desk in the corner of the secretary's office. And we didn't have monthly finance reports at first, so I started those. (I've now done over 400!). I found a more affordable auditor and payroll service for the church, so I'm proud that my work has made a difference.*

Favorite food: *Ice cream*

Favorite Hobby: *Acting and directing theater. I've done about 75 plays. My favorite role was one of the fathers in a musical called "The Fantastics."*

What words of advice do you have for the church? *Keep on going!*

Welcome, RPUMC's Organists



Rev. Mary Holladay

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce the hiring of Rev. Mary Holladay and Brenda Scott as RPUMC's new organist(s). Mary and Brenda applied as a duo because they're both retired and love to play, yet also enjoy flexible schedules. Both have history with our church, amazing musical skills, and joyful hearts for the purpose of Christian worship. Mary will continue to play for us through December and Brenda will begin in January—rotating every 3-6 weeks, but serving as one.



Brenda Scott

Now showing in Grace Gallery: “Poems and Thin Places”

A carefully curated pairing of photography by George Ridge and poetry by Page Thomas.



Page Thomas

Come experience an exhibit that invites you to seek out God and the sacred in art, Creation and everyday moments - through life's thin places.

2nd floor of the McCord building (Near the office)



George Ridge

December Worship



Christmas Cantata

A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

*Chancel Choir * Praise Team * Kids Choir * Orchestra*

SUNDAY, DEC 15TH AT 10:30 AM
ONE SERVICE

Blue Christmas

A holiday service
of hope & remembrance

Wednesday, Dec 18th @ 7pm
Riverside Presbyterian Church

Holidays can be hard. If you're feeling the weight of the season or grieving a loved one, consider coming to our *Blue Christmas Service* on Wednesday, Dec. 18th at 7:00 p.m. We will gather at Riverside Presbyterian Church, next door, to hear scripture, name burdens, and remember God's presence in the midst of loss. We will also light candles and hang ornaments in honor of those who have died -- giving thanks to God for the gift of their presence in this world.



Advent Prayer Stations

This year, RPUMC offers interactive Advent prayer stations; Concrete practices to help slow down and focus on the heart of the season: the hope we still hold in Christ.

Stations open 30 minutes before and after Sunday worship. 3rd Floor McCord Building.



Christmas Eve Services

December 24th: 4:30pm & 7pm

4:30 p.m. - Contemporary with the Praise Team, communion, and candlelight.

7:00 p.m. with the Chancel Choir, Chancel Ringers, communion and candlelight. (childcare available)

Pajamas & Pancakes

**Join us Sunday, December 29th
to celebrate the birth of Christ**

One Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Kids wear pajamas

Pancake breakfast time 9:30 a.m.



NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES AT RPUMC



**Family Ministry
Bonfire**



**One of several trunk
loads of diapers and
wipes for Baby Luv.**



**Blessing of the
Animals**

**Thank you to the
volunteers who
served meals to the
Family Promise
families.**

GENEROUS PEOPLE

**Estimated Giving
Card for 2025
(online version)**



The Finance Committee would like to say THANK YOU for supporting our church's ministries this year--and THANK YOU to those who submitted their estimated giving cards for 2025. This feedback enables us to plan for the future with confidence, continuing to serve our congregation and broader community.

If you still want to submit as estimated giving card, the QR to the left will bring you to an online form (or you can still bring cards to the church office).

Again: thank you for generously participating in RPUMC's mission: empowering others to live life abundantly in Christ.



DEEPER SPIRITUAL PURPOSE: ACOLYTING

"Acolyting is important because you are carrying the light of Christ. The role of an acolyte begins a church service and sets it into motion because it symbolizes the presence of God. Acolyting gives you a purpose in church and an opportunity to participate. The Lord says, "Faith without works is dead." Acolyting gives you the opportunity to put your faith into work, to strengthen it. Personally, it helped me to realize the importance of the fire and what it represented. It gave me a feeling of importance and made me happy to help my church." --Jake Manalo



Thank you to Ava Manalo for coordinating our Deeper Spiritual Purpose articles this year.



Jake Manalo

Jake is 15 years old and a Sophomore at Bishop Snyder High School. He joined RPUMC with the confirmation class in 2021. His parents are Lara and Jesse Manalo.

FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS



First Friday Friends

December 6th @ 11am

Music program
in the chapel for senior
adults followed by lunch
in the fellowship hall

We are meeting on December 6th at 11:00 on the third floor in the chapel.

Mary Holladay will be playing Christmas Carols and Christmas music and David Holladay will lead us in the singing. They are very talented and we are looking forward to the program. You won't want to miss this!

After the music we will return to the Fellowship Hall for a fun time led by Pastor Emily. The game is called White Christmas. You will need to bring some small item from your house or apartment that you are willing to share with someone else. It needs to be wrapped (or we will have white bags here). She will be telling a story and we will be passing the white bags around so you will go home with a new item to you. It will be fun if Pastor Emily is leading it.

The cooks will have a special yummy Christmas lunch for us.

If you don't usually come but are coming this time please call the church office and likewise if you usually come but won't be here also tell the office.

WOMEN IN MISSION

Sisters of Service: 2nd Tuesday at 7pm in the parlor

Circle of Hope: 2nd Thursday at 11am in the Fellowship Hall

Circle of Joy & Peace: 3rd Wednesday at 11am in the Fellowship Hall

YOUNG ADULTS

If you are between the ages of 18 & 35, join the RPUMC Young Adults for brunch every 2nd Sunday. They meet in front of the sanctuary following the traditional service and walk to a nearby location for brunch and fellowship.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

In November, the men were active participants in the Trunk or Treat and the Family Bonfire. A thank you to all the men for their cooking expertise. The UMM met in November and agreed to re-charter our UMM unit with the General Commission on United Methodist Men. The GC UMM states "Our mission is to support spiritual growth among men, helping men to mature as disciples as they encourage spiritual formation in others." We look forward to working with this GC UMM group.

OUR DECEMBER ACTIVITIES:

Monthly 3rd Saturday meeting December 21st at 9:00am in the Parlor.

Also plan to join us on the 5th Sunday for a Pancake Breakfast at 9:30am on the 29th. As always, ALL proceeds from donations at the pancake breakfast are sent to the Residing Hope (formerly Florida United Methodist Children's Home).

ARE YOU A HANDY MAN? There are several minor tasks that do not need a license or permit to complete at the church. Give Joe Springer a call, text or email to let him know if you can help. joe@jsanda.com 904-240-6366

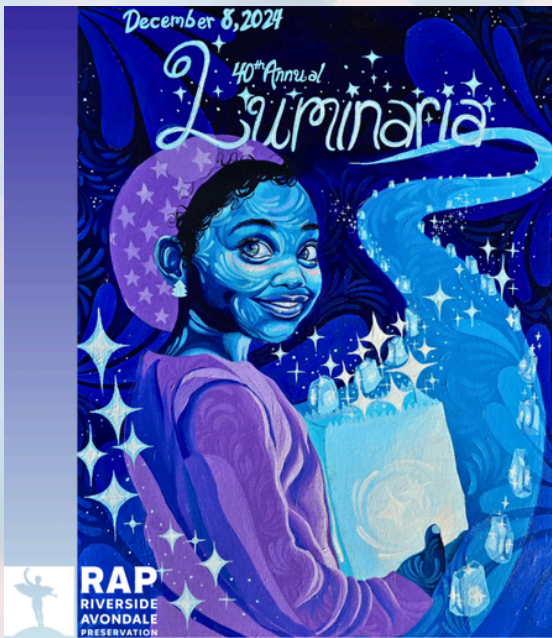
YOUTH MINISTRY

No youth on December 15th and December 29th

Rock the Universe: January 25th - 26th

Contact Ronin at youth@riversideparkumc.com for more information.





The Riverside and Avondale neighborhoods will celebrate Luminaria on Sunday, December 8th. RPUMC will assemble our luminary bags that morning after worship and--closer to dusk--will need help lighting luminaries at the park across the street. Please contact the office if you can help with the evening project at the park.

Poinsettias for Christmas

Every year we decorate our altar area with poinsettias at Christmas. The plants are purchased by members and friends to remember special people in their lives. The poinsettias will be displayed on Christmas Eve and can be picked up after the 7:30 service or by stopping by the church office during business hours. If you would like to purchase one or more poinsettia, please use the form below and return it to the church office with your payment no later than Wednesday, December 11th. Poinsettias are \$17 each.



Name _____ Phone # _____

Note: Booklets will be available at the Christmas Eve services. If you will are unable to attend and would like a booklet mailed to you, please provide your address here:

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

☐ In memory of or ☐ In honor of _____

☐ In memory of or ☐ In honor of _____

☐ In memory of or ☐ In honor of _____

☐ In memory of or ☐ In honor of _____

☐ In memory of or ☐ In honor of _____

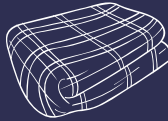
of Poinsettias _____ Total \$ _____

☐ Check # _____ ☐ Cash

Wednesday Night Ministries

The Wednesday night Ministry Team has been serving meals on Wednesday night since March 2020. For the first time, they are taking a well deserved break on Christmas Day. With cold weather returning soon, the team requests cold weather items such as blankets, new socks, and clean, gently used sweatshirts, beanies, and gloves. Drop off in the gray bin by the McCord main door.

ITEMS NEEDED



I was hungry,
you gave me something to eat.
I was thirsty,
you gave me something to drink.
I was a stranger,
you invited me in.
I needed clothes,
you clothed me.
Matthew 25:35-36



Scan here to sign up!

Trustees Update

Trustees have done a lot of very good work for the church this year. We celebrate 100% pledge support for the Forward in Faith Campaign. (You did it, church! Thank you!) We also celebrate that some concerning water spots in the sanctuary corners turned out to be deteriorated caulking—which is an easy fix and now repaired! We expanded the choir room (two rooms are now one) because the chancel choir was running out of room to fit new members. We give thanks for the dedication and wisdom of this incredible team. Thank you for being good stewards of our facility and ministry resources!

Adult Sunday School @10am

Covenant Class
(Rm 204)

*open conversation
on living our faith in
practical ways.*

Bible Searchers
(Rm 202)

*in-depth Bible study
taught by Rev. Dr.
David Holladay.*



Circle of Joy & Peace



Operation Christmas Child

These and other God-blessed Christians packed 14 boxes for Operation Christmas Child with personalized notes to send around the world and introduce Jesus Christ to children. An honorary box was sent on behalf of members who are home-bound/unable to attend and who love the Lord. Thanks to everyone! God is good all the time.



Here is what has been going on:

Memory boxes have been donated Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, South, Clay, and Nassau, St. Vincent's Southside, and Flagler Hospital. A special thank you to volunteers that have been able to deliver them!

In October, I completed RTS Bereavement Coordinator Training. In December and January, I will be assisting to teach local doulas and nurses *Resolve Through Sharing Bereavement Training: Perinatal Death*.

December 2- Ornament Night for bereaved parents at 6:30PM in the fellowship hall. This is a safe space to remember your child and create a remembrance ornament. Sponsored by Margaret's Memories & You Are Not Alone Support Group.

Volunteers have been scheduling time to help with quality controlling, crafting, and other projects that make Margaret's Memories possible. We are prepping for the spring box making. If you would like to prep things at home, please contact me.

If you quilt, knit, or crochet we are in need of large blankets for boys. We have some supplies if you would like them. We continue to receive thank you notes and emails from families/friends to thank Margaret's Memories for giving the gift of memories. We are continually told all the handmade items are very touching.

Save The Date:

March 2, 2025, Bracelet Making – 10 am in the fellowship Hall

April 5, 2025, Box Making - 10am to Noon in the Fellowship Hall

If you need more information on the events please contact me!

For more information email Nicole at margaretsmemories@hotmail.com or call the church office at 904-355-5491. You can also visit us on the web at www.margaretsmemories.org and "like" us on Face Book!

Racial Justice

Holiday Greetings from the Racial Justice Team.

Please remember the Yellow House's mutual aid cart during the holiday season. While the Giving Cart was destroyed during Hurricane Helene, there is a picnic table and benches to hold your donations. It is best to put boxed food, paper goods, magazines, and other items that could be ruined by the rain or morning dew in Ziploc or plastic bags. There is also a Little Diverse Free Library box in front of the gallery to hold books that have been banned in our school system. The address is 577 King Street, 32204.



1st	Bryan Davis Eric Waters
2nd	Tennison Drewry
3rd	Nancy Darragh
4th	Elizabeth Coley
5th	Louise Julia Lilah Manalo
6th	Quinn Mathis
9th	Byron Alvarado Nancy Newman Eden Santa Lucia
10th	Rick Devine Beautiful Phillips Susan Phillips
11th	Bobby Brazell
12th	Joe DiSalvo Julianne Kirchain
13th	Mark Mathews
14th	Brian Doran Kim Renne
20th	Stephanie Salzer
22nd	Julie Garmendia
24th	Ian Charleton Ria McCorkle
26th	Susan Russell Page Thomas
27th	Gordon Middleton
29th	April Laflash
31st	Amy Smith

Committee Meetings:

Finance/SPR Committee
Tuesday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees
Monday, December 16th at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council
Tuesday, December 17th 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
† Shirley Early
† Jo Herron
† Steven Jarvis
† Gordon Rehberg
† Carol Stelly
† Jim Todd



College Students

- Zachary Bradley
- Cooper Crowell
- Frankie Crowell
- Tre Devine
- Brenna DuPries
- Isabella Laffy
- Logan Laffy
- April Laflash
- Emily Matthews
- Emily Popp
- Matthew Popp
- Luke Renne

All worship services are 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

For more information:

Karate: kolbyskarateclub.com
Tai Chi: taoisttaichi.org

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 COMMUNION 8:30-12:30 Advent Prayer Stations 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers	2 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers	3 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 7 pm Tai Chi	4 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	5 5:30 pm Karate	6 11 am First Friday Friends	7 3 pm Karate
8 8:30-12:30 Advent Prayer Stations 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 12 pm Young Adult Lunch 5 pm Chancel Ringers	9 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm SPR/Finance 7 pm Tai Chi 7 pm Sisters of Service	10 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm SPR/Finance 7 pm Tai Chi 7 pm Sisters of Service	11 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	12 11:00 am Circle of Hope 5:30 pm Karate	13 12 pm Mental Wellness & Connection	14 10 am Cantata Rehearsal 3 pm Karate
15 10-12 Advent Prayer Stations 9:30 am Sunday School/Groups 10:30 am One Worship Service: Christmas Cantata 5 pm Chancel Ringers	16 6 pm Trustees	17 Newsletter Deadline 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 5:30 pm Girl Scouts 6 pm Church Council 7 pm Tai Chi	18 11:00 am Circle of Joy & Peace 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7 pm Blue Christmas Service 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	19 5:30 pm Karate	20	21 9 am United Methodist Men 3 pm Karate
22 8:30-12:30 Advent Prayer Stations 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Office Closes at Noon 4:30 pm Contemporary Worship Service 7 pm Traditional Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Office Closed 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	26 Office Closed 5:30 pm Karate	27	28 3 pm Karate
29 9:30 am Pancake Breakfast 10:30 am One Worship Service	30	31 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi				



"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 live Sundays
@9am Contemporary
@11am Traditional
facebook.com/RiversideParkUMC
(services are also uploaded
later to YouTube)**

Church Office: (904) 355-5491

www.riversideparkumc.com

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9-3:30

Friday 9-1

Rev. Emily Knight, Pastor
pastoreml@riversideparkumc.com

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

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

Millie Russell, Director of Contemporary Worship
m.russell@riversideparkumc.com

Ronin Ravanzo, Youth Director
youth@riversideparkumc.com

Jack Barnard, Bookkeeper
j.barnard@riversideparkumc.com

Britt Scott, Tech Team Leader
tech@riversideparkumc.com

Nancy Schubiger, Membership Secretary
membership@riversideparkumc.com

Cam McCorkle, Media Development Artist
media@riversideparkumc.com

Tre Devine, Custodian
t.devine@riversideparkumc.com

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