



breath OF LIFE

50 DAYS
FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST



RIVERSIDE REPORTER May 2025

Dear RPUMC Church Family,

As we journey through this sacred season between Easter and Pentecost, we are invited to breathe deeply of God's presence. Our sermon series, *Breath of Life*, leads us through the 50 days that transformed frightened disciples into Spirit-empowered witnesses. From resurrection morning to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we are watching how God's breath brings life, renewal, and purpose—not only then, but now.

Each Sunday, we're tracing how the risen Christ meets His followers in their confusion and fear, breathing peace, hope, and power into their lives. And each week, we are reminded: the same breath that raised Jesus is alive in us. The Spirit still moves—restoring what is broken, awakening what has grown weary, and equipping us to live with holy boldness.

On a personal note, I am grateful and excited to have been re-appointed for another year as your pastor. Our family is truly happy to remain here with you, and we give thanks for the love, support, and joy we've experienced in this church. Thank you for welcoming us, praying for us, and walking this journey of faith together. As we continue through this season, may the breath of God fill your heart with peace, your spirit with courage, and your days with renewed purpose!

BREATHE ON ME,
BREATH OF GOD,
FILL ME WITH LIFE ANEW,
THAT I MAY LOVE
THE WAY YOU LOVE,
AND DO
WHAT YOU WOULD DO.
—HATCH

FROM FEAR AND CONFUSION
TO POWER AND PURPOSE
THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT &
RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Rev. Emily Knight

Announcement Sunday

On April 27, 2025, Bill Hodges made the following announcement during both worship services.

Good morning. I am Bill Hodges, chair of the Staff Parish Relations committee. In the United Methodist Church this is the Sunday each year when clergy appointments are announced for the upcoming year.

I am honored to come before you and announce that Pastor Emily Knight has been reappointed as senior pastor for Riverside Park United Methodist Church.

I would like to take just a moment to talk about the appointment process and the historical significance of this day in the 135 year history of Riverside Park. I am mindful that we should not assume that everyone in the congregation is familiar with the appointment process.

The United Methodist church has what is known as an itinerant system which means pastors of local churches are assigned by the Bishop and cabinet and are rotated. This process is a cornerstone of the connectional nature of the United Methodist church.

Obviously the yearly reappointment process is a time of some tension and uncertainty particularly if a pastor is retiring or the minister and or the congregation has requested a change. It was not unusual for pastoral appointments to last as few as four and rarely longer than seven years. This has changed some recently. Pastor Emily's reappointment is indeed a blessing for Riverside Park.

While every reappointment is a celebration of the past year and looking forward to the promise of the future, this time is particularly meaningful in the history of our church. With this reappointment, Pastor Emily will become the longest serving minister in the history of Riverside Park United Methodist Church.

We have much to celebrate.

In addition to an outstanding Pastor, we are also blessed with a great staff. I have heard many positive comments about the beautiful services on Easter and the many activities during holy week. This only happens because of hard work and preparation. Please join me in in thanking the staff for all they do to make worshipping at Riverside Park so special.

Let's close with a word of prayer.....Dear lord bless Pastor Emily, Matt and Maddie.. Please bless Pastor Emily's service to Riverside Park as we celebrate her call to continue to serve you. Let's pause this announcement Sunday and remember and ask your blessing on those pastors who have come before Emily during our long and storied history. Make us respectful of the past, but open to new and innovative ideas. Let Riverside Park be a place of peace and spiritual growth for all who come through our doors and a beacon of hope for the entire community. In your name we pray, Amen.



Welcome New Members



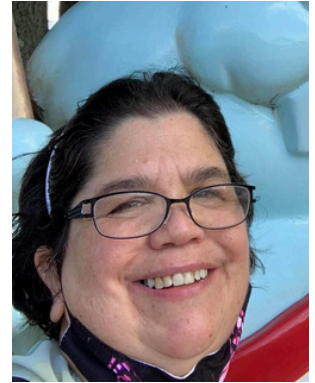
Barbara Bath



Kat & Don Gunderson



Danielle Kessinger



Maria Varunok



Laura & Michael Whiteman

Not pictured: Kim & Trevor Cope
Billy Kimbell, and Roderick Jungbauer



GRADUATE SUNDAY May 18th

We will celebrate graduates (high school and beyond) during both services on 5/18. **Send your graduate's photo, name, and info to Joye by May 12th at j.hampton@riversideparkumc.com.**



Memorials



Did you know that our church has an active Memorials Committee? When you contribute to honor a loved one, your gift is combined with others to provide tangible items supporting worship and ongoing ministries.

With the recent growth of our Chancel Choir, 12 beautiful oak chairs have been purchased for the choir room and sanctuary. Also, funding for 4 additional robes has been provided. These items will be used to the glory of God and in support of our music ministry for years to come.

GIFTS IN LOVING *memory*

In Memory of Gloria Kraft

Kristen & William Wright
Vickie Gray

In Memory of Gordon Rehberg

Pam & Ruben Allen
Elizabeth & Chuck Coley
Josi & Rick Devine
Tre Devine
Delores Harlow
Connie & Bill Hodges
Beth Joyner
Kit & Corky Thomas

In Memory of Ted DiSalvo

Pam & Craig Coffey

Special Guest at Easter

Thank you, church, for all of the great invitations you shared during lent. Among the record number of members and visitors at our Easter services was a member of a faithful family from our past. The former Amanda Townsend and her husband attended our traditional service. Amanda is the youngest of several siblings and the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. James Townsend (Kitty). She was on a tour of Florida celebrating her 60th birthday and she said "we have to be at Riverside Park on Easter"! She was thrilled to see our continuing ministry and witness the great crowd with so many new faces. In true Townsend fashion, Amanda was able to greet several of the "old guard" but wanted to pass along her best to all of our members. Hallelujah.

Wednesday Night Ministries

Lord, I am so thankful for Riverside Park UMC, the staff, the congregation, the choirs, the worship opportunities, the ministries, the activities, but most importantly the love that connects us to each other, to our community, and to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the last 2 Riverside Reporters I counted at least 25 happenings at this church! Wednesday Night Ministries is a “Happening Place” not just a delicious dinner once a week and socks & T-shirts but a heart warming connection to our neighbors.

Lord, I am so thankful for all who come to our door because of our love for them.
Lord, I am so thankful for all who support WNM with their prayers, gifts, and service.

First Friday Friends

CALLING ALL FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS

Our last gathering for the Spring is May 2nd. We will take a break for the summer so be sure to come to our May gathering!

We will be playing Bingo (by popular request) and of course have prizes. A lunch will be served, as usual.

Put September 5th on your calendars when the Dulcimer Group will come. They are always a great beginning for the fall gathering.

See you on May 5th. If you have any questions call Susan Russell at 904-234-5823 or the church office at 904-355-5491.

May 2nd at 11:00 a.m.
Rhames Fellowship Hall

Fun, Food, & Fellowship
for Senior Adults

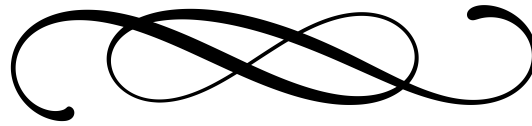


Women In Mission

Thurs., May 8
Circle of Hope
11 a.m.
Riverside Park
Apartments

Wed., March 21
Circle of Joy & Peace
11 a.m.
Fellowship Hall

Tues., May 13
Sisters of Service
7 p.m.
Parlor



United Methodist Men

Pancakes? Pressure Washing? Waffle House?
WHAT'S NEXT?

The UMM want to thank everyone for coming out and enjoying another 5th Sunday Pancake Breakfast. As you know, the men donate our time and the UMM buys all the food needed for everyone to enjoy. We don't take a dime of reimbursement, we donate 100% of ALL money donated to the baskets on the tables to Residing Hope (formerly the Methodist Children's Home). Our breakfast in March allowed us to make a donation of \$152 to the Residing Hope organization.

Thank you for your donations.



In April we had a pressure washing party. Two areas were targeted. One group started by the choir/nursery walkway and the other group continued in the court yard. Our efforts merged on the walkway from the church to the nursery area. Our thanks go out to the men that manned the various parts of this effort. We hope to make this a scheduled activity and we will see how soon it needs to be repeated. If you were going to determine where we would pressure wash next, where would it be? Let us know and we will see if we can get it done.

In April, we also took an informal approach to the monthly meeting and met for breakfast and comradery at a local eatery. We also sponsored and participated in the Family Roots Fare that was held in the north parking lot. Everyone had a great time and we met local folks that stopped in. Plans are being made for the summer and let's see how another Family Roots Fare fits in. Other outings are being discussed or are in the works.

If you want more info, we will be meeting Saturday, May 17th in the Parlor at 9:00. With the April breakfast meeting's success, we will provide some eggs and toast to go with the donuts for those attending. See you then.

Margaret's Memories

Here is what has been going on:

Thank you everyone for understanding the need to reschedule box making so I could spend time with my family and mom during her recent hospital stay. Your thoughts and prayers during this stressful time helped more than you will ever know.

Box Making has been rescheduled for May 18, 2025. It will be a "drop in"

style between services on a Sunday. We will start at 10 AM and end at 1 PM or when we run out of supplies! It is possible we will end before 1 PM.

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

In October, I completed RTS Bereavement Coordinator Training. In December and January, I assisted teaching local doulas and nurses Resolve Through Sharing Bereavement Training: Perinatal Death.

At the end of May, I will be speaking on a parent panel and share my family's experience with the birth and loss of our Margaret. The panel is part of bereavement training and provides caregivers insight on what can be beneficial when caring for a family of loss.

Thank you to all the crafters that have been 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.

Save The Date:

- May 18, 2025, Box Making 10AM till 1 PM in the Fellowship Hall
- June 14, 2025, Princess & Superhero Gala – A fun filled family dance and game afternoon. Funds from this event will be earmarked to purchase supplies and items for memory boxes.

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!



Palm Sunday & Easter 2025

Thank you to everyone who helped and served!!



Racial Justice

Calling All Gardeners, Book Lovers and Declutterers

Do you have a surplus of citrus? Are your gardens overflowing with produce and herbs? Are you dividing your bulbs and plants? Are you spring cleaning and wondering what to do with all those cleaning products, hygiene products you bought and then didn't like? Are you inundated with magazines, greeting cards, pens, book marks, calendars, and other items that come from non profits seeking donations?

If so, please bring all your surplus to the Yellow House on 577 King St. and place on their outdoor picnic table. Yellow House is also collecting books for adults, teens and children for their "Little, Free, Diverse Library." Place these items in the little library "bird house" near the picnic table. You will be helping so many less fortunate neighbors as well as keeping these items out of our landfill.



Kairos Outside

Kairos Outside of Northeast Florida (KO) has a weekend retreat coming up May 16-18, 2025. KO is part of a larger ministry that serves men, women, and youth impacted by incarceration. KO ministers specifically to women who are affected. Members serving on the team are asking all Christian brothers and sisters to please join us in covering the weekend with prayer. You can sign up on PrayerVigils.net and pray from the comfort of home, traveling in your car, or anywhere on the globe! Type "Kairos Outside of Northeast Florida" to find the event.

Additionally, the larger Christian community is invited to participate in specific parts of the weekend to share Christ's love with the guests.

Join us for Walk in Love on Saturday evening, May 17th, at Marywood Retreat Center. Fellowship begins at 7:30 pm with a snack supper, speaker, and prayer in the team's villa (Villa A). The Walk in Love music will follow at 8:45 pm outside the villas.

The weekend's Closing will be Sunday afternoon, May 18th, at 2:30 pm in the chapel at Marywood. Members of the community are encouraged to arrive and find seating in the chapel between 2:00 and 2:15 pm.

Let There Be Lights!



"These make such a difference!" "They are beautiful!!" "Perfectly matched"
"Wow! I can actually read my bulletin now." "We needed these."
"It's a huge advancement for the live stream visibility!"

These are just a few of the comments and reactions to our new lights in the sanctuary. We always want people to lift their eyes in worship, but next time you're in the sanctuary: do look up! We have some beautiful new updates to the lighting. A generous designated gift was given to the trustees and the new lights were working just in time for Easter Sunday.

A "blessing of the lights" is coming soon...
Alleluia! And thanks be to the Light of the World!



- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1st | Darren Nettles
Maisie Remo |
| 4th | Elouise Pearsall |
| 10th | Judy Marks
Anne McVay |
| 12th | Jon Brockel |
| 14th | Kevin Round |
| 16th | Tallulah Henderson |
| 17th | Michael Hodgkin |
| 20th | Hudson Gunby |
| 21st | Quinton Scott |
| 22nd | David Hannah |
| 23rd | Debra Whitaker |
| 28th | Linda LaBell |
| 29th | Brian Alvarado
Brooke Lawrence
Matthew Popp |
| 30th | Mike Litwin
Anthony Owens |

Committee Meetings:

Finance/SPR Committee
Tuesday, May 13 at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees
Monday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council
Tuesday, May 20 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
- † 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

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	2 11 am First Friday Friends	3 3 pm Karate
4 COMMUNION 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers	5 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	6 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 5:30 pm Girl Scouts	7 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	8 11 am Circle of Hope 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	9	10 3 pm Karate
11 MOTHER'S DAY 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers	12 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm SPR/Finance 7 pm Sisters of Service	13 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm SPR/Finance 7 pm Sisters of Service	14 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	15 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	16	17 Newsletter Deadline 9 am United Methodist Men 3 pm Karate
18 GRADUATE SUNDAY 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 10-1 Box Making for Margaret's Memories 11 am Traditional Worship 5 pm Chancel Ringers	19 6 pm Trustees	20 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm Church Council	21 11 am Circle of Joy & Peace 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	22 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	23	24 3 pm Karate
25 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship	26 MEMORIAL DAY Office Closed	27 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate	28 5:30 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	29 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	30	31 3 pm Karate



"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/RiversidePar
kUMC
(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

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John Larsen, Director of Traditional Worship
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Millie Russell, Director of Contemporary Worship
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Bobby Brazell, Youth Director
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mary.holladay@riversideparkumc.com

Brenda Scott, Organist
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