

SUMMER SERMON SERIES

WATER AND WAVES

Experience God who meets us in the ebb & flow

RIVERSIDE REPORTER July 2025

Feeling dry? Tired? Curious?

Come as you are – and find rest, renewal, and real connection. Join us Sundays for “Water & Waves” and experience the God who meets us in the ebb and flow of everyday life.

In worship, we will discuss refreshing images of water in the Bible: Deep wells. Rivers of mercy. Still water. Fount of every blessing, grace like rain, water that cleanses and makes new, Peace like a river. Joy like a fountain. Love like an ocean.

“As the deer longs for water, so my soul thirsts after you.” –Psalm 42:1

As the Florida July heat intensifies, we’re reminded of the importance of staying hydrated. Just as our bodies thirst for water to stay strong and healthy, our spirits thirst for the living water that only God can provide. This month, our worship theme focuses on the role of water in the Bible—symbolizing life, renewal, and God's sustaining presence.

In the same way we wouldn't go a day without water in this sweltering heat, let's not go a day without seeking God's presence. Let God's word fill your soul and refresh you, just as water nourishes and revitalizes us physically. Remember, when we rely on God, God is the source of true refreshment—satisfying our deepest needs. Stay hydrated, both physically and spiritually, this summer, and let the living water of God's grace renew you each day.

With joy and expectation,

Rev. Emily Knight

Staff SPOTLIGHT



John Larsen

What is your position at Riverside Park UMC?

Director of Traditional Worship. I coordinate music for the traditional service and direct the Chancel Choir and Chancel Ringers. In the past I served as youth director for 10 years. I retired 3 years ago from teaching 35 years in the Duval County Public Schools. Most of those years were at First Coast High School and the last 7 at Samuel Wolfson School for Advanced Studies.

How long have you been at RPUMC?

I came to RPUMC when I was a senior in high school. The only person I knew was older than me, so I went to the college/career Sunday School class with her. Our teacher was Gov. Farris Bryant. (former governor of Florida). Later, wonderful teachers included Kitty Townsend and Mary Parkman.

What's your favorite Bible verse?

Did you know that many of the anthems that our wonderful choir sings are based on texts from the Bible? It is a weekly blessing. If I have to pick one it our be,

Isaiah 40:31 but they who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They shall mount up like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and never faint.

(I know my choir members are singing this in their heads!)

Do you have any pets?

2 minnows that my grandson, DJ caught in a creek almost 2 years ago!

What's your favorite food?

Thai, Italian, American, Chinese, Japanese, French, most every dessert!

Have you always lived in Jacksonville?

Always, except for 2 summers at FSU in Tallahassee and 1 summer in London, England at the FSU campus there.

What are some things that bring you joy?

Number 1 - serving my savior Jesus Christ and my grandson DJ Flagler. Wednesday nightchoir rehearsals and Sunday afternoon Handbell rehearsals with dedicated people using their talents as part of their personal ministry.

Annual Conference 2025



Ephesians 2: 8-9. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

In Bishop Berlin's opening remarks, he said, “When God's grace is a part of our lives, the Holy Spirit is empowering our lives, and we actually begin to do things that are noble and outstanding and even extraordinary.”

Throughout the conference you could hear and see how the Laity and Clergy, working together, are being empowered and doing extraordinary things.

Here are key takeaways from the Annual Conference, with more details available at flumc.org/ac:

- Laity Session: Laityspace.org offers resources, news, and podcasts. Upcoming pilgrimages include a Wesley Heritage Tour in England and a Civil Rights Tour in Montgomery, Alabama.
- Annual Conference Offering: Funds are split between Bethune Cookman University (for scholarships and religious programs) and Disaster Recovery Ministry (for mobile disaster response equipment).
- Constitutional Amendments (pending global vote):
 - Allows for regional conferences to make rules for themselves that do not bind other conferences.
 - Adds “gender” and “ability” as non-barrier characteristics for membership in a UM congregation.
 - A revision to strengthens UMC's longtime support for racial justice.
 - Clarifies educational requirements of clergy who may vote for clergy delegates.
- Resolutions:
 - A resolution for the Florida UMC to speak on governmental issues was not approved due to existing processes.
 - A revised mission statement was approved for submission to the 2028 General Conference. “The mission of the Church is **to be** and to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- Finances: Although the conference budget increased by 6.25%, apportionments will rise by only 3%.
- Wespath/Pension: A new clergy pension plan, Compass, will launch in January 2026.
- Disaster Relief Ministry: A “Buckets of Hope” Challenge encourages churches to create buckets for hurricane victims. If your small group or ministry is interested in putting together some flood buckets, please contact me or the church office for more information.

The conference emphasized collaboration among churches to maximize impact and encouraged leveraging the gift of grace in service.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you, Beth Joyner, Annual Conference Representative



**Bishop Tom Berlin
& Beth Joyner**

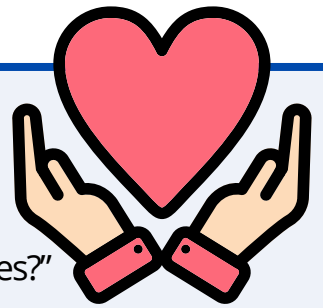




Wednesday Night Ministry

WNM needs men's tee and golf shirts, any light colored long sleeve shirts, and sunscreen.

July is red, white, and blue. July is hot dogs, watermelon, and apple pie which is exactly our first Wednesday in July menu for our neighbors to enjoy. All are invited to come help make this a festive day and come help anytime during the month as well. Thank you to all WNM volunteers, each and every one of you is appreciated. Thank you to Charlie and Jackson Morreale for their weeks of service to this wonderful ministry of RPUMC. Thank you church for your prayers, support, love.



Connect Care Ministry

Yvonne Sloan is asking, "Are you aware of what the Connect Care Ministry team does?"

Our efforts are focused on maintaining and extending the church community to our church family, those who can't be present with us and those visiting us. We currently have a small group of members making up our team. They are all dedicated to making phone calls, sending cards, notes, text messages and/or emails to extend communication and connection with our church. There are sometimes actual visits as possible and appropriate. Yvonne Sloan is currently serving as the team lead.

Right now, we have 10 members we are focusing on that are not always able to attend church in person due to sorted limitations.

We welcome more team members and learning about those that could benefit from our outreach!

- Would you like to be a team member or learn more about the ministry?
- Do you know a member that we could help with keeping a connection to our church?

I will be happy to answer questions or provide more information if needed. I may be reached at yvonnehsloan@gmail.com or 904.412.3663.

Our wonderful and committed team members include, Jennie Bibb, Joan Burns, Bonnie Dudley, JoAnn Goodwin, Beth Joyner, Stephanie Salzer, Martha Swoope, and Kit Thomas.

Thank you 2ND QUARTER giving statements

WILL BE SENT OUT VIA EMAIL AT THE END OF JULY. PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE A NEW EMAIL ADDRESS. IF YOU RECEIVED A PAPER COPY, BUT WANT AN EMAIL COPY, PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

FINANCE@RIVERSIDEPARKUMC.COM

New Construction at the Riverside Park Apartments

The board is excited and renovations will begin in July. Please keep this process (and our neighbors) in your prayers.

Sincerely, Kevin Crowell
(apartment board president)



"God of peace and new beginnings, we love it when 'all things are made new'— but we don't always enjoy the process of getting there. So please bless the Riverside Park Apartments and all who call it home. Bless the staff and those who will show up to do renovation work. Grant comfort in change, strength through transition, and safety during construction."

Summer Giving: We're grateful for the ways our church family shows up for one another! While attendance can slow during these months, the need for ministry remains strong— especially our Wednesday night dinners, which serves body and soul to those who come literally thirsty. **Would you consider a special gift this season to help cover a meal or two? Your generosity helps us offer food, friendship, and the love of Christ to those who need it most. "Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple... he will by no means lose his reward." — Matthew 10:42**
Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus.



Easy Online Giving

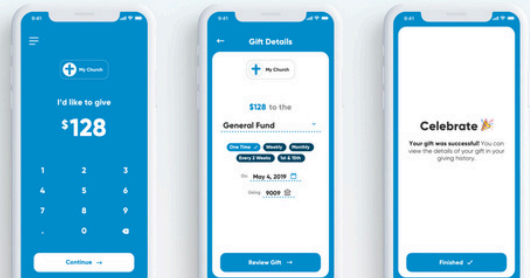
Get the My Well Ministry Giving app today!

5 Ways to Connect to MyWell

- Go to www.mywell.org/give/rpumc
- Text rpumc to 40101
- Download the My Well Ministry app
- Go to riversideparkumc.com & click on Give
- Scan the QR code with your phone's camera or code reader

Easy Online Giving 1..2..3!

- 1 Select Amount
- 2 Confirm Details
- 3 Review & Give!



If you prefer to write a check, make it out to RPUMC and mail it to 819 Park St., Jacksonville, FL 32204 or place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or schedule payments through your bank's website.

Gather at the River

2025 Summer VBS for Grown Ups
Final gathering: Sunday, July 27
at 3 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall



These have been so fun!
(Above) Bead animals represent "The River of Life," and (right) watercolor paintings illustrate the Jordan River scriptures. Thanks to Riverside Apartments for hosting our second gathering. Don't miss the final one on July 27th!



Parables & Playgrounds

'pop up' VBS experiences for kids at playgrounds around the city. *Snacks. Songs. Bible activities.*

Next Sessions:

Saturday, July 19th @10am

Meet at Riverside Park Playground

Sunday, August 3rd @3pm

Meet at Southside Park Playground





Thank you to our wonderful Chancel Choir for sharing their gifts and talents with our congregation. The choir is taking a well-deserved break for July and the first week of August. (But don't worry! Great music will continue with special music and soloists for these Sundays).

Thank you



INDEPENDENCE DAY
THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE
CLOSED ON FRIDAY, JULY 4TH.



Family Roots Market

August 1st 4-8 p.m.

- Artists/Makers
- Food Vendors
- Agriculture
- Fun for all ages

*Hosted by UMM
in the large parking lot*

Looking ahead: Early August

- August 1st: Family Roots Market
- August 2nd: Youth beach day and hospitality for free back to school physicals
- August 3rd: Last kids VBS day at Southside Park



Hospitality is one of our church's core values and something we do well (even over the summer). Our church hosts a ymca camp for the whole summer and we also host a week of string music called "Prelude Camp" which fosters young string musicians.





Margaret's Memories

Saving memories ...
...one footprint at a time.

Margaret's Memories

Here is what has been going on:
"Drop In" Box Making in May was a productive morning. Thank you to everyone that was able to assist assemble memory boxes.

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

If you have been trained to quality control — I could use your help! Many facilities have requested memory boxes.

In April we had a beautiful donation from CFI Marketing. The company had a supply drive and craft day in honor of Margaret's Memories. We received beautiful footprint cards and a huge box full of supplies! Thank you Miranda Snipes for organizing this!

At the end of May I was a parent speaker for Resolve Through Sharing Bereavement Training: Perinatal Death. The class was an online class for caregivers that work with families of loss. I shared my family's story of Margaret. Talking about our experience- what was helpful, what was not, what we wish could have happened will help families in the future.

If you quilt, knit, or crochet we are in need of large blankets for boys & girls. We have some supplies if you would like them.

Save The Date:

** Reschedule date TBA*** 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 Facebook!

United Methodist Men Archery Outing



Stan Stokes, Andre Varunok, Rick Bible, and Marc Julia take aim during the UMM's archery outing in June. Their next meeting will be held in the parlor on July 18th at 9am.





Love kids? Help plant seeds of faith in little hearts by serving in the nursery or Kids Club. Contact the church office for more information.

RPUMC KIDS CHOIR

SILLY SCRIPTURE SONGS

THIS SUMMER WE ARE KICKING OFF 8 WEEKS OF SINGING, PLAYING, AND DANCING TO SILLY SONGS BASED ON SCRIPTURE!

Sunday Mornings ♦ June 1st - July 27th ♦ 10-10:30AM ♦ Room 403

RPUMC KIDS CLUB

SUMMER SERIES:
NOAH'S ARK
AND FRUITS OF
THE SPIRIT

June: Noah's Ark:



A Story of Trust in God

*July and August: Growing
in God through the Fruits
of the Spirit*

Sunday Mornings: 10:30-11 AM Room #402



JULY

Birthdays

- 1st Doug Matthews
- 2nd Keith Hall
Cade Renne
- 3rd Carly Gunby
Amanda Springer
- 4th Teresa Meyer
EJ Waters
- 5th Henley Gunby
Susan Stone
- 6th Jennie Bibb
Tucker Griffith
Rafael Julia
- 9th Joye Hampton
- 10th Tim Riechmann
- 12th Caden Bridges
Bonnie Dudley
- 13th Joan Burns
Blake Griffith
- 16th Matt Hemphill
- 18th Mary Lemmenes
- 19th Penelope Diao
- 20th John Cogburn
- 22nd Meghan Waters
- 23rd Chuck Pickren
- 25th Alex Anderson
Mia Anderson
Shirley Early
- 27th Ashley Alston
- 29th Amelia Alvarado
Sara Fenwick
- 30th David Morcom

Committee Meetings:

Finance/SPR Committee
Tuesday, July 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Church Council
Tuesday, July 15 at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees
Monday, July 21 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

- Cooper Crowell
- Frankie Crowell
- Brenna DuPries
- April Laflash
- Emily Matthews
- Emily Popp
- Matthew Popp



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

The YMCA Summer Camp will be on campus 6/2-8/8.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate	2 5:15 pm Free Dinners	3 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY—OFFICE CLOSED	5 3 pm Karate
6 COMMUNION 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship	7	8 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm SPR/Finance	9 5:15 pm Free Dinners	10 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	11 12:00 pm Mental Wellness & Connection	12 3 pm Karate
13 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship	14	15 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate 6 pm Church Council	16 5:15 pm Free Dinners	17 Newsletter Deadline 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	18	19 9 am United Methodist Men 10 am Kids VBS @ Playground 3 pm Karate
20 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 3 pm River City Chorus Concert	21 6 pm Trustees	22 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 pm Karate	23 5:15 pm Free Dinners	24 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi	25	26 3 pm Karate
27 9 am Contemporary Worship 10 am Sunday School/Groups 11 am Traditional Worship 3 pm VBS for Grown-Ups	28	29	30 5:15 pm Free Dinners	31 5:30 pm Karate 7 pm Tai Chi		



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 and YouTube Live on Sundays

@9am Contemporary @11am Traditional

facebook.com/RiversideParkUMC

youtube.com/@riversideparkumc2015



Church Office: (904) 355-5491 www.riversideparkumc.com

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9-3:30, Friday 9-1

Jacksonville, FL 32204

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