

holy disruption

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Advent Worship Series

**Advent begins Sunday, November 30th,
arriving not as a quiet guest, but as a holy disruption—
a light scattering darkness,
a song that disturbs complacency,
a peace bold enough to confront violence**

Mary *experienced* this disruption. Her Magnificat still rings with the courageous promise that God is turning things upside down for the sake of love. We listen again this season to her song and to **the prophets who imagined a world remade by God's promised Messiah**. And like every long-awaited child, Jesus' arrival brings change, but Christ's coming reorders the world with hope, justice, and love deeper than we could imagine.

These ancient visions still ask us daring questions:

What in us must shift to welcome Christ?

Where must God's peace lovingly disrupt what we have accepted as "normal"?

As you move through Advent, linger with our daily reflections and the symbols in our prophet and nativity windows. Let them interrupt your assumptions, widen your hope, and lead you toward the gentle, life-altering joy of God's Kingdom breaking in.

**Scan here for the daily Advent devotional
or pick up a printed copy at the church office**

**And make sure to check out Grace Gallery (on the second floor outside
the church office) where church members will express this in art.**



December Events

Christmas Poinsettias

Order yours by December 10th
Form available online
or call the church office



Access the
daily
devotional
(above)
or sign up
to help with
our Christmas
Eve services
(below)



5th

11am: **First Friday Friends** meet in the Fellowship Hall for food & fellowship for senior adults

5th

4-7 p.m. **Family Roots Market** in the large parking lot. Hosted by UMM.

6th

10-11:30 a.m. **Women's Luncheon**
All women are invited. Hosted by Women In Mission.

9th

6:30 p.m. **Sisters of Service** meeting
Parlor - First Floor McCord Bldg.

10th

9am: Deadline to order **Poinsettias**
Order forms are available online.

11th

11am: **Circle of Hope** meeting
Parlor - First Floor McCord Bldg.

14th

10:30am: **Christmas Cantata**
ONE Worship service with special music
Kids and youth ministries will *not* meet

17th

5:00 p.m. **Love All Serve All Dinner** for
Wednesday Night Ministries

6:30 p.m. **Blue Christmas Service**
Chapel - 3rd Floor McCord Bldg.

24th

Christmas Eve Worship:
Candles & Communion at both service:
4:30pm: **Contemporary Service**
7pm: **Traditional Service**

28th

10:30am: **One Worship Service**
Kids can wear pajamas.

RIVERSIDE REPORTER

DECEMBER 2025

Dear RPUMC Family,

December is one of the most-visited months for churches, which means many people will step into our doors for the first time or for the first time in a long while. So (especially this month) we need *everyone* to help with the Holy work of welcome.

Easy Ways to Welcome:

- Even in the parking lot, look to see if anyone might look lost.
- **Park further away than usual**, so guests have room.
- Instead of aiming for your friends first during the passing of the peace, **look around for those who may be new or standing alone.**
- Offer directions if someone looks uncertain. Ask, “Can I help you get somewhere?” restrooms, nursery, coffee in the fellowship hall, seating (we *don't* have reserved pews).
- Mention that we have a cheesy **welcome gift at the greeter table** (it’s popcorn with a tag that says, “Thanks for popping by!”), but for Christmas Eve, we will have hot chocolate bags for our first-time guests in worship.

If you welcome someone who ISN'T new to the church, that's fine, too. It's always nice to be welcomed somewhere (and we are still under a 'name amnesty' policy).

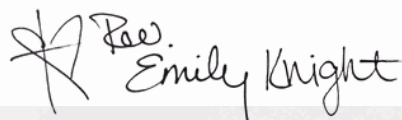
- If they say, “I've been here before,” you can reply: “Then welcome back!”
- If they say, “I'm a member,” you can say: “Great to meet you!”

Easy Ways to Invite:

- Give a specific service (or gathering time) and a reason **why you love it**: “The cantata has amazing music,” or “The candles at Christmas Eve worship are beautiful.”
- **Post on social media** (or share the church's post): “This is my church if anyone wants to join me for Christmas Eve.”
- If someone mentions stress, needing connection, or has lost a loved one, **please tell them about our Blue Christmas service on December 17th** where we give space for grief and honor loved ones who aren't with us. It can be very comforting.
- Keep it **low-pressure and authentic**. (“No pressure. You're welcome any time.”)

Our church is feeding the neighborhood, our people are warm-hearted, the sanctuary is beautiful, and the Christmas story (the news of Jesus) really *is* good news. It is EASY to invite people to Riverside Park UMC this month. Thanks for helping to welcome for all.

Your Fellow Servant in Christ,


Rev.
Emily Knight

FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS

Ministry and Fellowship for
Senior Adults

Friday, December 5th
11:00 a.m.

Fellowship Hall



Come enjoy a musical
Christmas program
with John Larsen and
Mary Holladay.
Lunch will be served
after the program.



Family Roots Market

Friday

Dec. 5 4-7pm

Hosted by UMM
in the large parking lot



Women's Luncheon

Sat., Dec. 6th • 10-11:30 a.m. • Fellowship Hall

All women of the church are invited!

RSVP by Nov. 30th by calling the church office (904) 355-5491.

Hosted by Women In Mission (All 3 circles).

Worship Time Changes

ONE combined
10:30am
service:

12/14 & 12/28



Church Office Holiday Hours

Dec. 24: close at noon

Dec. 25: closed

Dec. 26: closed

Dec. 31: close at noon

Jan. 1: closed

Christmas Cantata

SUNDAY, DEC 14TH
10:30 AM
ONE SERVICE

Chancel Choir * Praise Team
Kids Choir * Orchestra



Reminder:
Kids' Choir for Cantata:
singers must attend practice
Saturday 12/13 @10-10:20am

Blue Christmas

A holiday service of hope & remembrance
Wednesday, Dec 17th @ 6:30pm in chapel

Holidays are harder with grief, but no one does this alone. Come to our Blue Christmas Service on Wednesday, Dec. 17th at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel (3rd floor, McCord building) to hear scripture, acknowledge burdens, and remember God's presence in loss. We'll light candles and hang ornaments in honor of loved ones who have passed, giving thanks for their presence.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

DECEMBER 24, 2025
4:30 CONTEMPORARY
7:00 TRADITIONAL

Communion & Candlelight



RIVERSIDE PARK UNITED METHODIST
819 PARK STREET
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32204



**One Worship Service @10:30 a.m.
Sunday, December 28th
Kids are welcome to wear pajamas.
We will welcome new members**

Board of Trustees

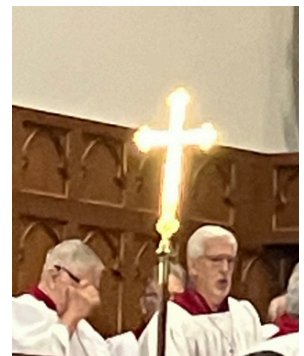
Thank you to everyone who came to the Trustees' town hall on the north parking lot and the potential partnership with Park Thrive. Your questions—about tax implications, safety, and how this fits our mission and community witness—were sharp, practical, and exactly what we needed to hear. If you couldn't attend, we are still open to questions and input. We are continuing to gather details from Park Thrive and we want every concern and every good idea on the table as we make a solid decision.



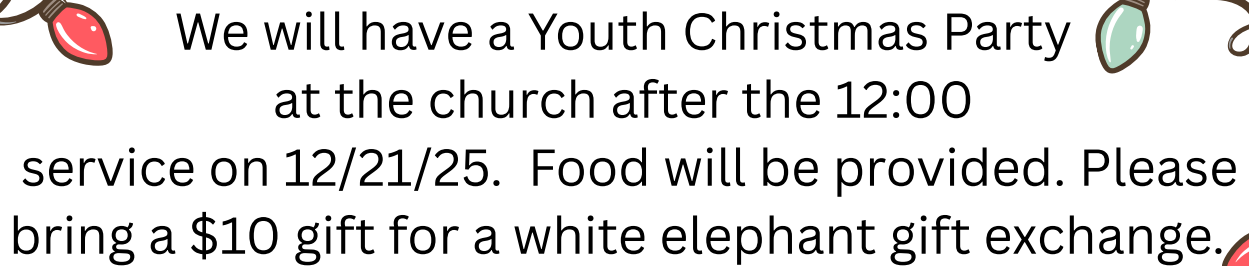
The kitchen has received some upgrades, made possible through a generous matching grant from Bank of America and the Julia family. These improvements will allow us to achieve commercial kitchen status, opening the door to additional grants and new opportunities for community partnership to support our Wednesday meal ministry. We now have a three-compartment sink, a better grease trap, and updated lighting fixtures, both of which improve safety, efficiency, and overall functionality.

Glimpses of Gratitude

Thank you, church, for sharing your moments of gratitude through the month of November! We continue to give (and share) thanks and generosity in ways that are contagious and generative. We are grateful for Ben Franco, the owner of Mossfire Grill who called the church and said, "I know you feed people, so can I bring you some supplies and goods from my restaurant?" (seen here to the right)



Youth Ministry



We will have a Youth Christmas Party at the church after the 12:00 service on 12/21/25. Food will be provided. Please bring a \$10 gift for a white elephant gift exchange.

Margaret's Memories

We are grateful to share how God continues to work through the Margaret's Memories ministry. Over the past month, Memory Boxes were lovingly delivered to both Baptist Medical Center and UF Flagler Hospital. These boxes offer comfort to families walking through loss, and each delivery is a reminder of the compassion our church community helps provide.

Last month, a family continued their ten-year tradition of creating and donating memory boxes in honor of their daughter, gifting them to Baptist South. Their journey has been one of healing, and their generosity blesses other families whose hearts are hurting.

In October, our ministry was honored to assist the Spiritual Care team at Baptist Medical Center in providing bereavement-care education to nurses, social workers, CNAs, and chaplaincy staff. Equipping caregivers with compassionate tools is an important part of supporting families during their most difficult moments.

Looking ahead, in May 2026 we plan to attend the Pregnancy and Infant Death Alliance Conference in New Orleans, a valuable multidisciplinary event focused on evidence-based bereavement care. While the full cost of attendance is significant, God has already opened doors: an AirBnB and a roommate have reduced housing expenses to \$678, and the Amanda Bethany Scholarship Foundation has generously offered partial support. Additional fundraising activities are being planned to help cover remaining costs.

Upcoming Fundraisers & Events

• January 2, 2026 – Winter Wonderland Family Dance

Enjoy a fun “last hurrah” before school resumes! Proceeds will help bring a Caring Cradle to UF Flagler Hospital. This special cooling bassinet allows families more precious time with their baby—a profound gift during their grief.

• January 25, 2026 – Bracelet Making in Honor of Amanda Bethany Strong

A meaningful time of community, remembrance, and support for our ongoing mission.

Thank you to everyone who offers time, prayer, and resources to keep this ministry thriving. Together, we are *Saving Memories One Footprint at a Time*.



Wednesday Night Ministries

The Joy of Christmas is the joy
that comes from the True Light.
Jesus is this Light.

For I was hungry and you gave me
something to eat, I was thirsty and you
gave me something to drink, I was a
stranger and you welcomed me, I
needed clothes and you clothed me.
Matthew 25:35

The coming of the true light at Christmas is celebrated joyfully here at Riverside Park UMC and in our homes and neighborhoods. Christmas lights are everywhere. The gift of light is my special request this month, Flashlights! WNM continues every week to give our neighbors nourishment for body and soul as well as clothing, shoes, blankets and jackets. For Christmas we are planning to throw a party with our neighbors as our guests and let's give them a gift of light. Donations will be greatly appreciated and any help also.

"The True Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world" John 1:9

Thank you to First Place Sports for donating tennis shoes for our WNM - Clothes Closet.

**MOST NEEDED AT THIS TIME:
Jeans, cargo pants or dockers size 32-36 and men's boxer briefs
(loose not tight) size large, color black.**

LOVE ALL
SERVE ALL



RIVERSIDE PARK
UNITED METHODIST
CHRISTMAS PARTY
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17
4:15PM

Wednesday Night Ministry Christmas Dinner Wednesday, December 17, 2025

The Wednesday Night Ministry is delighted to host a special Christmas Dinner for our guests on December 17, 2025, in the church social hall. This festive, sit-down celebration will include holiday décor, a Christmas tree with Blessing Bags, and seasonal music to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Guests will be greeted outside with Christmas punch and cookies at 4:15 p.m., followed by a lasagna dinner served indoors at 5:00 p.m. The evening will include a reading of the Christmas story and a Christmas sing-along. As guests depart, they will receive Blessing Bags and donated hoodies.

A devoted team of volunteers will assist with hospitality, service, safety, and cleanup to ensure a joyful and smooth event.

We look forward to celebrating the season together!

United Methodist Men



The United Methodist Men have a few things going on that may be of interest to the Church...

On Friday, November 7th we sponsored the Family Roots Market in the north parking lot. Approximately 80-100 guests came out for the hot dogs, bounce house and the other vendors in the lot.

On Saturday, November 8, we continued pressure washing the church walkways. We were able to complete the entrance areas in



October. We worked on the public sidewalks on the West and North sides of the church. Our next Pressure Washing Event will be to complete the sidewalks on the west side of the Church. More info to follow.

We assisted the residents of the Riverside Park Apartments return to their newly renovated 9th floors apartments on November 15th. I am sure additional help will be needed as the other floors are completed. All are invited to these little Apartment Work Parties. We do not attempt things we know we can't do.

On November 16th we hosted a social meeting in the Fellowship Hall to introduce the Church to the UMM and the UMM to the Church. Join us as we welcome our new president Stan Stokes and help him decide what the Men's Group will be doing for the next few months.

At the end of November, we hosted the 5th Sunday Pancake Breakfast on the 30th. Our Church members came, brought their families and brought their guests to this informal time for fellowship. As a reminder, the UMM donates all costs for supplies and necessities and ALL monies donated at these breakfasts are sent to Residing Hope, formerly the Florida United Methodist Children's Home.

There will be no December General meeting. Join us in January as we welcome our new President and returning Treasurer, Stan Sokes and Clark Burner.

What can we help you or your group with?"



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

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 to update your
information, (904) 355-5491

December Committee Meetings:

Committee meetings typically begin at 6 p.m.
and are held in the church office library.

Finance/SPR Committee

Second Tuesdays:
December 9

Board of Trustees

Usually meet the third Monday:
No meeting planned for December

Church Council

Third Tuesdays:
December 16

May God's love surround our
members on the home care list:

- † Jennie Bibb
- † Emory Cook
- † Jo Herron
- † Steven Jarvis
- † Carole Rooks
- † Fred Russell
- † Carol Stelly



DECEMBER



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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 10:30 am Tai Chi 5 pm Girl Scouts 5:30 pm Kairos Council	3 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	4 7 pm Tai Chi	5 11 am First Friday Friends 4 pm Family Roots Market	6 10 am Women's Brunch
7 COMMUNION SUNDAY Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	8	9 10:30 am Tai Chi 6 pm SPR/Finance 7 pm Sisters of Service	10 Poinsettia Deadline 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	11 11 am Circle of Hope 7 pm Tai Chi	12 12:00 pm Mental Health & Wholeness	13
14 ONE SERVICE 9:30 am Sunday School/Groups 10:30 am Christmas Cantata 5 pm Chancel Ringers	15 6 pm Family of Loss Ornament Event	16 10:30 am Tai Chi 5 pm Girl Scouts 6 pm Church Council	17 Newsletter Deadline 5:15 pm Love All Serve All Christmas Dinner 6:30 pm Blue Christmas Service 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	18 7 pm Tai Chi	19	20
21 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Office Closes at Noon 4:30 pm Contemporary Service 7:00 pm Traditional Service	25 CHRISTMAS Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27
28 ONE SERVICE 10:30 am Worship Service	29	30	31 Office Closes at Noon 5:15 pm Free Dinners			



RIVERSIDE PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Empowering others to live life abundantly in Christ."

**NOTE: One Service at
10:30 a.m.
on Dec. 14 & 28**

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

819 Park Street

RIVERSIDE PARK
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jacksonville, FL
Permit No. 2717