

February 2026 Riverside Reporter

Return to Peace

Widening in an imperfect spiral,
life circles around its origin, a centering-point.
Sometimes tightly, other times leaning so far –
you fear it may break away entirely.

Revolutions sometimes come wild and blindly,
no sense of their width or speed or consequence.
Like clothes twisted and squeezed in washing,
we feel dizzy and off-kilter. Disconnected.

Scanning the horizon, we seek to calm our seasick selves
against sensory chaos; life's incongruity.
Search for that point that recreates connection,
Jesus standing on the water, calling.

It is not the axis or beacon that's lost,
for God draws on all – from hearts to galaxies.
No! It's the connecting line, the conversation that falters.
Hurry and distraction generate an anxious static.

I hope the start and stop of half-filled journals and
quickly blessed meals will hold me in this centrifugal fling...
But deeper, a pleading to reclaim that first peaceful knowing
of God's gentleness shepherding my soul.

Abba saying, I am here, child.
Talk with me; we will sit in this tender temple:
I realize, the center awaits, ready to transmute fear.
Morning light filtering through an open heart.

I, we, can choose to breathe, pause, and release.
Oneness is close in slower, intentional breaths.
In that quiet exchange, a gift of returning home
to the Deep Peace of Christ.

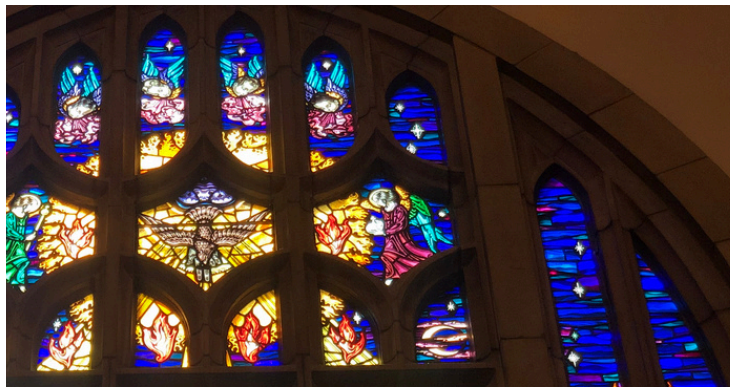
-pst

(This poem by Page Thomas responds to our January series on peace and gently leads to our February emphasis on Spiritual disciplines and sitting with Jesus through Lent)

Spiritual Retreat



Saturday, February 7th
Breath, Poetry, Yoga, Music
\$10/person (includes lunch)



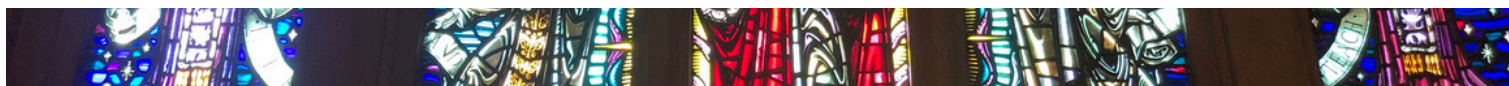
Saturday, February 7th 2026 10am-3pm

Take a day to unplug and join others from Memorial UMC (in Fernandina) and RPUMC at the immersive day retreat called “Beauty: Pathway to the Divine.”

We invite you to come and be surrounded in beauty and further explore how it can connect us with God. This retreat will include times of worship, music, and studying the gorgeous stained-glass windows in our RPUMC sanctuary.

This will be followed by breakout sessions including prayerful walking in a labyrinth, walking to and exploring the Cummer museum, poetry writing, breath work, gentle yoga, and the prayerful craft practice. Choose the sessions that connect with you most.

A catered lunch of sandwiches, salads, and soups (coffee, tea, water included) will be provided for a cost of \$10 per person which is paid at the door that day. (Via cash or check written to RPUMC). Come and feed your soul!



PRAYER. SILENCE. FASTING.

For the first three Sundays of February, we'll explore practical ways to deepen our spiritual life through prayer, silence, and fasting. We'll be joining UMC congregations across Florida for these topics. We encourage you to also check out the related resources from Wesleyan Rooted, including a devotional app, devotional book, and kid-friendly materials. Great tools to engage personally and as a family:

www.wesleyanrooted.org

These practices will guide us naturally into the Lenten season—the 40 days leading up to Easter—when we focus more intentionally on spiritual growth.

just Jesus.

LENT 2026



Just Jesus is a Lenten sermon series inviting us to step away from tangled ideas about religion and spend time with Jesus himself—simple, honest, and firsthand. Together, we'll read the Gospel of Luke, explore Jesus in his historical context, and form and share our own answers to the question, "Who is Jesus?" This series is especially for those who are spiritually hungry, sensing disconnect, or wanting to build (or rebuild) faith. The reading plan is below and we will have an online Bible study on Thursdays from 6:30–7:30 pm (Feb. 26–March 26). Whether you're new, deconstructing, or lifelong in faith, this is an open and hopeful invitation to just sit with Jesus again—or for the first time.

Lent 2026 – Gospel of Luke in 40 days

- Ash Wednesday – Feb 18: Luke 1:1–25
- Thu, Feb 19: Luke 1:26–56
- Fri, Feb 20: Luke 1:57–80
- Sat, Feb 21: Luke 2:1–20
- Sun, Feb 22: Sabbath / Catch-up
- Mon, Feb 23: Luke 2:21–52
- Tue, Feb 24: Luke 3:1–20
- Wed, Feb 25: Luke 3:21–38
- Thu, Feb 26: Luke 4:1–15
- Fri, Feb 27: Luke 4:16–30
- Sat, Feb 28: Luke 4:31–44
- Sun, Mar 1: Sabbath / Catch-up
- Mon, Mar 2: Luke 5:1–16
- Tue, Mar 3: Luke 5:17–39
- Wed, Mar 4: Luke 6:1–26
- Thu, Mar 5: Luke 6:27–49
- Fri, Mar 6: Luke 7:1–30
- Sat, Mar 7: Luke 7:31–50
- Sun, Mar 8: Sabbath / Catch-up
- Mon, Mar 9: Luke 8:1–21
- Tue, Mar 10: Luke 8:22–39
- Wed, Mar 11: Luke 8:40–56
- Thu, Mar 12: Luke 9:1–27
- Fri, Mar 13: Luke 9:28–62
- Sat, Mar 14: Luke 10:1–24
- Sun, Mar 15: Sabbath / Catch-up
- Mon, Mar 16: Luke 10:25–42
- Tue, Mar 17: Luke 11:1–28
- Wed, Mar 18: Luke 11:29–54
- Thu, Mar 19: Luke 12:1–34
- Fri, Mar 20: Luke 12:35–59
- Sat, Mar 21: Luke 13:1–35
- Sun, Mar 22: Sabbath / Catch-up
- Mon, Mar 23: Luke 14:1–35
- Tue, Mar 24: Luke 15:1–32
- Wed, Mar 25: Luke 16:1–31
- Thu, Mar 26: Luke 17:1–37
- Fri, Mar 27: Luke 18:1–30
- Sat, Mar 28: Luke 18:31–43
- Sun, Mar 29: Sabbath / Catch-up
- Mon, Mar 30: Luke 19:1–48
- Tue, Mar 31: Luke 20:1–26
- Wed, Apr 1: Luke 20:27–21:38
- Maundy Thursday – Apr 2: Luke 22
- Good Friday – Apr 3: Luke 23
- Holy Saturday – Apr 4: Silence. Be still.
- Easter (Apr 5th): Luke 24:1–12 (in worship)
- Week of Easter: Luke 24:13–34
- Week of Easter: Luke 24:25–53

Feb.
1st

YOUNG ADULT LUNCH

Meet after the Traditional Service
in front of the sanctuary.



FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS

Get ready to enjoy some fun Bingo on Feb. 6th
We will have prizes and lots of laughs and a good time.
We will have a yummy lunch as usual by Elizabeth & her crew.
See you at 11am for coffee and chats and 11:15 for games.

New "Life Group" for Parents
will continue meeting.
Sundays @10:10
Church Office Library

Sunday Groups for Adults @10am

Bible Searchers (Room 202)
in-depth Bible study with readings

Covenant Class (Room 204)
open conversations about faithful living

NEW Life Group (Office Library)
A group for parents with kids

WOMEN IN MISSION

Sisters of Service
Galentines gathering
in a members' home
Thurs, Feb 12

Thurs., Feb. 12
Circle of Hope
6pm - Fellowship Hall

Wed., Feb. 18
Circle of Joy & Peace
11 a.m. - Fellowship Hall



United Methodist Men
Next Meeting:
Saturday, Feb. 21 at 9 a.m.

Thank you to all who prayerfully participated in our estimated giving campaign.
We are especially grateful for the many *newer* members and friends of the church who responded—your generosity reflects God's grace at work among us. If you intended to submit an estimate and haven't yet, you can use the QR code below. Additional details and results will be celebrated with the congregation following the February Finance Committee meeting. As we move forward, we pray that God will guide us in faithful stewardship, strengthen our shared ministry, and use our gifts to love God and neighbor in this community and beyond. Amen.



2026
Estimated Giving



SAVE THE DATE

“BBQ and Bingo”
February 24th at 5:30 p.m.
Rhames Fellowship Hall

Hosted by the hospitality team. Dinner by donation (to offset the cost to the church). Fun prizes for Bingo winners. Gather & connect with folks from BOTH worship services. Come out for fun & food!

Remembrance Lunch
to honor loved ones we miss
February 13th @ noon
Church Office Library
Bring a lunch

“Love and Remembrance Lunch”
February 13 | Noon | Friday
Church Office Library (2nd Floor)

At Valentine’s Day, we honor those we love—including those who are no longer with us.

- Bring a lunch
- Bring a photo of a loved one (optional)
- Share a favorite memory or story

Laughter and tears are welcome.

The church will provide drinks, dessert, and space to gather. Sharing grief, remembering loved ones, and showing up for one another are important parts of caring for our mental and spiritual well-being. For this reason, the February Mental Health and Wholeness gathering will share this program.

Whether you come to support others or to honor someone you love, all are welcome to the table.

Mental Health & Wholeness
Friday: Feb. 13th @ Noon
Church Library

Bring your lunch and hold space for mental health and wholeness.

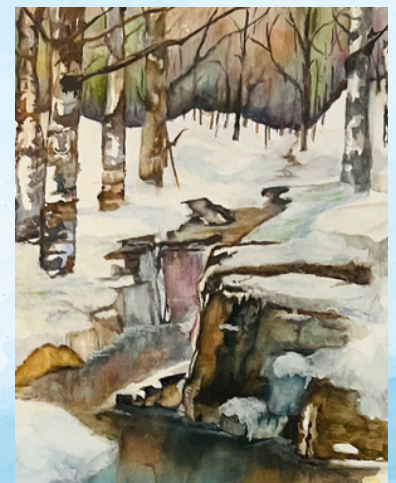


GRACE GALLERY

AN ARTS MINISTRY OF RPUMC

Our new Grace Gallery exhibit features the paintings of Barbara Vanderhoff. A resident of the Riverside Park Apartments, Barbara is a familiar and welcoming presence at church gatherings like First Friday Friends, worship, and pancake breakfasts. We celebrate her creative gifts and give thanks for the Spirit of God moving through her work.

Come visit Grace Gallery on the second floor (outside the church office)





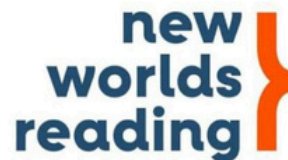
Kids Club has been doing a series of lessons about peacemaking and community building in the name of Jesus. Kids choir is learning songs for Palm Sunday worship. And we celebrate that kids are serving and participating in the life of the church: acolytes, Wednesday meals, greeters, etc. Parents, please keep bringing your kids to church! We love them and it's good for the whole body of Christ! ❤️

Kids Club: Sundays at 10-10:30am; Kids Choir: Sundays 10:30-11am

Free Community Event Hosted in our RPUMC Fellowship Hall:

Join New Worlds Reading and First Coast YMCA for a

Family Fun Night



**February
12**

Thursday

5:30pm-7:00pm

HAVE FUN WHILE:

- Learning strategies, tips, and tools to support your child's reading development!
- Enjoying a free meal for registered participants.
- Participating in reading activities and games.

Pre-register with the QR code:



SCAN ME

RPUMC Youth Ministries



The youth want to thank the church for supporting their winter lock-in. We had dinner together and plenty of fun with games, laser tag, bowling, and mini golf! A few of the kids were participating in their first ever youth group event.

6th-12th Graders: Join us Sundays @10am in the youth room (3rd floor McCord building--upstairs from the church office).



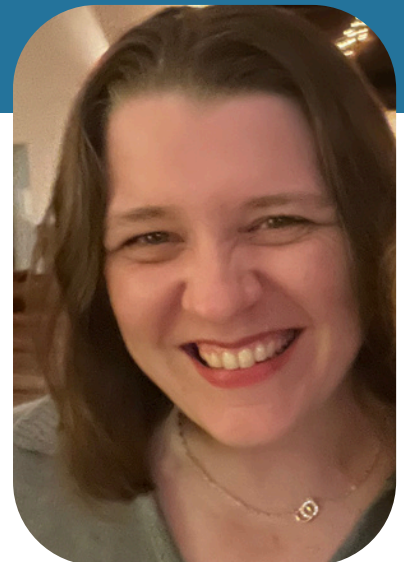
Celebrations and a New Season

After much prayer, Britt Scott has decided to step back from her role as Tech Team Coordinator. Her leadership has had a lasting impact. She is the reason we are able to live stream our Sunday services. When the pandemic suddenly changed how we gathered, Britt stepped up with creativity, persistence, and faithfulness—quite literally “pulling it together” so that worship and connection could continue during an incredibly challenging time.

Britt shared that serving as “a connection point between the congregation and the service, especially during the height of the Covid shutdowns, was an honor.” We are deeply grateful for her dedication, problem-solving, and the strong foundation she has built for the tech ministry.

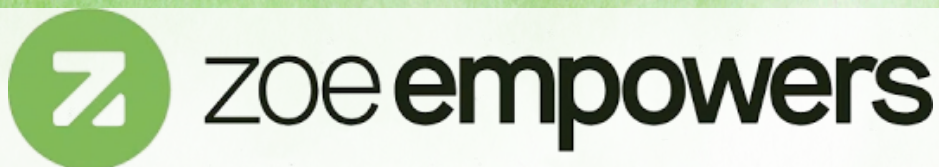
Britt has committed to helping with a smooth transition and will continue serving through Easter. After that, we are thankful she will remain part of our church family as a member in the pews!

The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) will begin the search for a new Tech Coordinator, and we ask for your prayers, recommendations, and applications. Additional volunteers are also needed to help support the ministry during this transition—training and support will be provided. We give thanks to God for Britt and for this season of ministry that has blessed our congregation in so many ways.





Margaret's Memories Update: Thank you to everyone who attended the winter dance in support of a CaringCradle for UF Flagler. We also shared a meaningful time making bracelets in honor and memory of Amanda Bethany Strong. Memory boxes were delivered to St. Vincent's Clay and Baptist Medical Center. Please keep the families who receive them in your prayers, along with those who received earlier boxes.



Our Shared Mission Project for the Northeast District:

Dukore "Work Together" Mwendo Empowerment Group, Rwanda

Zoe Empowers helps orphans become self-sufficient, not dependent.

Zoe Empowers produces sustainable, generational change, not quick fixes.

Prayer cards with the names of children and families in our Zoe Empowers group will be available later in February. One big brother, Jean De Dieu, is caring for six younger siblings—two just one year old. Other teens (Ernest, Fabrice, Modeste, and Olivier) are participating on their own, but they are no longer alone.

Thanks to generous support from our district churches and Christmas offerings (including ours at RPUMC), we have met our 2025 goal and are already \$5,344.96 toward our \$9,000 goal for 2026. Join us for online info sessions on March 12 at 2:00 or 7:00 PM, and a virtual tour in May to meet the children in our group. www.flumc.org/zoe-empowers-nedistrict for more info.

Wednesday Night Ministries

As colder weather arrives, many of our homeless neighbors are seeking shelter, but some remain outdoors. We provide fleece-lined waterproof blankets for those outside, and indoor blankets for those in shelters. Most urgently needed: Blankets (fleece throws or twin bed size), Outdoor jackets (to wear over hoodies), Athletic shoes

Please place donations in the covered collection basket at the south entrance to the business office/social hall. Do not use the grey distribution bins.

Thank you for your generosity and support! —Wednesday Night Ministries Team

Racial Justice Team

Racial Justice Team invites you to join the zoom call for
“A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice”

Join ecumenical and interfaith leaders on Feb. 25, 2026 in Washington, D.C., or online via livestream, for a public witness of worship, moral courage, and solidarity with our neighbors. Worship begins at 10am.

SIGN UP >>



Save the Date

- March 12th at 2:00pm or 7:00pm: Online info sessions for Zoe Emopwers
- March 21st 9am-12 Local Park Cleanup Day
- March 29th Palm Sunday (one combined service) Potluck & Egg Hunt
- April 2nd : Maundy Thursday Worship 6:30pm
- April 3: Good Friday Stations of the Cross open 9am-7pm (youth will gather in the evening for ice cream and stations)
- April 5th: Easter Sunday (9am and 11am Worship Services)



- 1st Vance Whitaker
- 4th Diane Wells
- 6th Brittany Bruce
- 7th Cynthia Round
- 10th Brandy Henderson
Timothy Keatley
Tim MacQueen
- 11th James Rooks
- 12th Monica Tindall-Richardson
- 14th Sandy Murphy
- 16th Kara Manning
- 17th Betty Cooper
Joseph Lek
Taylor Newman
Corky Thomas
- 20th Henry Alvarado
Maria Varunok
- 21st Wanda Smith
- 23rd Topher Cogburn
Molly Miller
Chris Western
- 24th Mackenzie Springer
- 26th Niel Fleming
- 28th Woody Garner

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

February Committee Meetings:

SPR Committee

Tuesday, February 3 at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees

Monday, February 16 at 6:00 p.m.

Finance Committee

Tuesday, February 17 at 4:00 p.m.

Church Council

Tuesday, February 17 at 6:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: FINANCE COMMITTEES MEETINGS
HAVE CHANGED TO THE 3RD TUESDAY AT 4 PM.

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

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



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.



FEBRUARY

Office Hours

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 COMMUNION SUNDAY Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 12pm Young Adult Brunch 5 pm Chancel Ringers	2	3 10:30 am Tai Chi 5 pm Girl Scouts 6pm SPR Meeting	4 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	5 7 pm Tai Chi	6 11 am First Friday Friends	7 10 am Spiritual Retreat
8 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups	9	10 10:30 am Tai Chi	11 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	12 11 am Circle of Hope 5:30 New Worlds Reading Event 7 pm Tai Chi 7pm Sisters of Service (alternate location)	13 12 pm Mental Health & Wholeness Remembrance Lunch	14
15 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups	16 6pm Trustees Meeting	17 Newsletter Deadline 10:30 am Tai Chi 4pm Finance Meeting 5 pm Girl Scouts 6 pm Church Council	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 11 am Circle of Joy & Peace 5:15 pm Free Dinners 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	19 7 pm Tai Chi	20	21 9 am UMM Meeting
22 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	23	24 10:30 am Tai Chi 5:30 BBQ & Bingo	25 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	26 7 pm Tai Chi	27	28



"Empowering others to live life abundantly in Christ."



Sunday Mornings in the Sanctuary:
@9am Contemporary
@11am Traditional
Nursery care available.
Sunday school @10am

Worship with Us!



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

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

Jacksonville, FL 32204

819 Park Street

