

April 2026 Riverside Reporter

What if resurrection isn't just something we celebrate once a year but something we experience right in the middle of our real lives? **This April, we're stepping into a new series called "Resurrection in Real Life."** Together, we'll explore what happens when our honest human experiences—our doubts, failures, questions, and burdens—meet the life-changing power of Jesus.

Jesus didn't hide His scars after the resurrection. He showed up, fully honest about what He had been through. And that means we don't have to hide either. We can bring our real questions, our real stories, and our real struggles.

Each week, we'll look at a different part of real life:

- When doubt creeps in and we wonder, *"Can I really believe this?"*
- When failure weighs heavy and we ask, *"Did I ruin everything?"*
- When life feels uncertain and we cry out, *"Where is God?"*
- When the burden feels too much and we whisper, *"How much longer can I carry this?"*
- When change comes fast and we wonder, *"What do I do now?"*

The resurrected Christ speaks real hope into all of these experiences.

We invite you to reflect on your own story of resurrection and transformation using a simple phrase: **"I once was _____... but now I'm _____."**

Maybe yours is: "I once was overwhelmed... but now I'm learning to trust." ~or~ "I once was ashamed... but now I'm forgiven."

Write it down. Pray through it. Share it with someone you trust. You might even see ways God is bringing new life that you hadn't noticed before.

And if you're not sure what to put in those blanks yet—that's okay too. This series is a place to discover it.

Bring your doubts. Bring your questions. Bring your whole story. Because resurrection isn't just something that happened back then. Resurrection is something God is still doing right now.

Join us for Special Services in April:



April 2: 6:30 p.m.
Maundy Thursday
(Last Supper)



April 3rd:
Good Friday/
Stations of the
Cross



April 5th:
EASTER SUNDAY!

Rev. Emily Knight

just Jesus.

LENT 2026

Gospel of Luke in 40 Days Reading Plan

- 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



Maundy
Thursday
April 2nd 6:30pm Service
Holy Communion
Stripping the Altar

Experience Jesus' journey from Gethsemane to the Grave

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**Open Good Friday 4/3
9am-6pm**

Visit a series of multi-sensory prayer stations that walk through details in the Good Friday story— from Gethsemane to the grave.

Pray in the garden. Feel the thorns that mocked Jesus.

Add your name to the cry of the crowd.

Hear the hammer. Breathe out with Christ.

Hand sanitizer will be available throughout. All ages welcome.

Open 9am-6pm on Good Friday (4/3) Look for the welcome table in front of the breezeway entrance off of Park St.



Join us for Easter Sunday

Worship with us on Sunday, April 5th
9am Contemporary & 11am Traditional



Bring a flower from your yard to cover
the cross in signs of life!
Post your photos to the RPUMC Family
Facebook Group.
Invite friends to join us, too.
Both services will be live streamed.



Tips For Inviting Friends

Easter Sunday is a great excuse to invite others to worship God with us. ...and your invitation could be the way someone encounters the hope of Christ.

How to invite someone to church:

- Pray about it first. Ask God to help you find the words and notice the opportunity. (Even just confessing to God that it might feel awkward is a great prayer!) Pray that any invite would be genuine—out of care for the person and love for Jesus.
- Be relational. Don't yell at random people from the side of the road. The means should match the message, so DO invite people who know that you care about them. And DO allow people to say 'no' without judgment.
- Ask if they would like to go WITH you. Don't throw out a vague and open invite. Offer specifics: "I'll meet you just inside the main doors on Park Street" or—even better—offer to meet before or after for a meal or coffee.
- Share what you love about our church. (I usually say that the music is great and the people are warm—or if they have kids, I tell them that kids are genuinely welcome.)
- Answer questions (or check in to see if they have questions). What to wear, where to park, what to bring, what to expect—these can all be overwhelming for a first experience. Part of hospitality is taking away as much of the unknown as possible.

In all things, remember that the goal is to invite people into the love of Christ, not just the Church.



3 Ways to Welcome:

1. **Make room in the parking lot. Park further away than you would normally park.**
2. **Expect guests. Look for them. Say hi to a new person before saying hi to your friends.**
3. **Say goodbye after the service, also.**

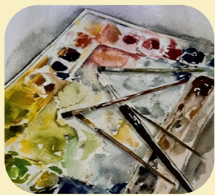
Hospitality Team

Welcoming, nurturing community and fellowship within the church. The mission of the Hospitality Committee. Since the onset of this committee, we have felt the welcoming of fellowship through Taco dinner night, which set the tone of excitement in planning BBQ, Bingo, Banana pudding. As it is said, there is no "i" in team. Pam Pearsall, Kit Thomas, Karen Western, Elizabeth Coley, Diane Wells, Cory Lek, Miranda Snipes, Lise Dabney, Barbara Bath, Amy Collier, Page Thomas, Diane Wells and Susan Siegel....all coming together as a team to help ensure a great time is had by all. The team will be working on another dinner soon, please keep a look out for the date and time! What is done in love, is done well!

First Friday Friends

RPUMC's ministry for senior adults meets the first Friday of each month (except during the summer). On April 3rd, the group will walk-through the Stations for the Cross and follow the journey Jesus took on Good Friday. Lunch will be served at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Next month, the program will be a magic show performed by church member Rick Devine.

Grace Gallery

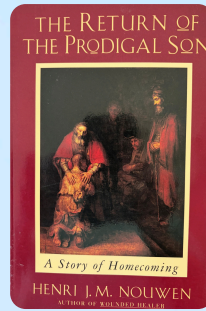


For the second year, Grace Gallery is pleased to host the Jacksonville Watercolor Society's Members non-juried show. JWS supports watercolor artists whether beginners or

professionals through a variety of educational opportunities and shows. Please check out the exhibit on April 6 through May 29 on the 2nd floor hallway of the McCord Building. For more information on Jacksonville Watercolor Society see their website at www.jacksonvillewatercolorsociety.org.



Bible Searchers Class: New Book Study



The Bible Searchers Sunday School class will begin a new book study on April 22nd. Led by Rev. David Holladay, the class meets in room 202 of the McCord Building on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome!

United Methodist Men Men's Breakfast/Mom's Morning Off

The United Methodist Men are hosting a breakfast for all men, dads and the kids on Saturday, April 18th from 9-12. The playground will be open. Breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, eggs, coffee, juice, and water. RSVPs requested, not required.

Scan to
RSVP:



April 18th - 9 a.m. - Fellowship Hall
Speaker - Larry Figart

MEN'S / MOM'S
breakfast / morning off

Thank You, Rick Bible

The Trustees really appreciate Rick Bible's volunteer facility manager role; he is doing fantastic work that is having a positive impact on our church's infrastructure.



Finance Update

Your Finance Team is hard at work following up on the recommendations of our annual audit. Some of the tasks were easy, some where a little harder but, all were necessary. Thank you for all you have done and what you have allowed our Church to do with your tithes and offerings.



Stewardship Update

A new team will begin meeting shortly after Easter. This new stewardship team will gather to pray, set strategic goals, and plan healthy conversations



about sustaining ministries. Stewardship is a shared conversation, and we welcome your ideas. If you have suggestions or would like to be part of this conversation, please contact the Finance Team.

In the meantime: one simple way to practice wise stewardship is by reducing processing costs. Many members faithfully give through our online platform, MyWell. While convenient and necessary, each transaction includes a small processing fee. In 2025, those small fees added up to more than \$3,600 in processing costs for the church (that would have covered over 14 weeks of Wednesday ministry meals).

Especially if you are using the online portal for giving, we ask you to please consider:

- Shifting your online giving to an ACH bank transfer instead of a credit card – this option reduces processing fees compared to card payments.
- Consider a small increase to offset the processing cost so that the ministries receive the full and intended amount.
- Shifting to automatic bill pay through your personal bank – the most cost-effective option because it avoids processing fees entirely.

The Stewardship Team will be working in the months ahead to set additional strategic goals. Again, thank you for the many generous ways you are building and sustaining faithful discipleship and our mission for Christ.

Wednesday Night Ministry

Glory Hallelujah! The Lord has risen indeed. Luke 24:34. The good news of the resurrection is that Jesus loves us so much he died for us and he wants us to love one another. Love is not something we say but something we do every Wednesday evening giving food, clothing, bus passes, and prayer. Thank you for all your support, love, and prayers.

Racial Justice

*Little Free Diverse Library
Spring Book Drive for 904Ward*



It's time to dust off those book shelves and downsize your collection for a good cause. Bring your books to the hallway going to the office or dining hall for the first 3 weeks of April. Linda LaBell will collect your books for

904Ward to restock the 27 Little Free Diverse Libraries throughout Jacksonville.

Mental Health & Wholeness

The Mental Health & Wholeness group will meet in the library on Friday, April 10th at 12 noon. Everyone is welcome, including anyone who wants to learn more about mental health and wholeness, people who feel mentally well, those who are living with temporary or chronic mental health conditions, those who feel stressed, burned out or exhausted, and those who are supporting someone who is living with mental health symptoms.

Margaret's Memories

Margaret's Memories is hosting a box-making event on Saturday, April 11th in Room 302 (Youth Room) . Stop by between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. to help assemble bereavement memory boxes for local hospitals. For more information, visit www.margaretsmemories.org

Update from the Staff Pastor Relations Committee

SPRC is grateful to share a few updates with our church family!

An interview team recently spent time prayerfully discerning candidates for our accountant position. After a thoughtful process, they recommended Cynthia Round to SPRC, and we're delighted to share that Cynthia has already begun serving in this role. She brings a wealth of experience in accounting, financial reporting, and tax preparation for both individuals and businesses, and we're grateful to have her as part of this important ministry.



Cynthia Round

We're also thankful to have secured an interim leader for the AV/Tech Team, Susan Siegel, who will step in when Britt Scott concludes her time with us. Susan will begin serving the Sunday after Easter, helping ensure a smooth transition in this vital area of worship support.

Finally, we invite you to join us as we celebrate and give thanks for Britt Scott's contributions to our church. She will be recognized during our combined Palm Sunday service.

Please continue to keep all of these transitions in your prayers!



Susan Siegel



We are scheduled to serve meals
April 5-11.
Scan the QR Code to sign-up.



April 18,
9:30 -3:30
at St. Paul UMC
Cost: \$10
(includes lunch)



District Gathering

Beloved Community

The NE District is hosting a training on cultivating genuine fellowship in our local churches. The training for clergy and lay members will include theological reflection, practical tools, and guided dialogue to engage differences with grace, strengthen trust, and courage, Christ-Centered Love – communities that reflect God's reconciling work in the world.

Graduate Sunday

On May 17th, we'll recognize graduates who have a connection to Riverside Park UMC. Please contact the church office if you, your child, or grandchild will be graduating from high school and beyond. Send a photo, name and info to Joye at j.hampton@riversideparkumc.com





KIDS CLUB

Sunday Mornings
@10:00-10:30
2nd room from nursery
Bible lessons & games
for pre-K to 5th grade.



KIDS CHOIR

Sunday Mornings
@10:30-11:00
3rd room from the nursery
Music & instruments
for pre-K to 5th grade.

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS Needed for one Sunday a month



Contact the
church office
for more
information



6-12TH GRADE
SUNDAYS @10AM
IN THE YOUTH ROOM

WOMEN IN MISSION

Tues., April 14
Sisters of Service
6:30 p.m. - Parlor

Thurs., April 9
Circle of Hope
11 a.m. - Fellowship Hall

Wed., April 15
Circle of Joy & Peace
11 a.m. - Fellowship Hall

Mental Health & Wholeness
Lunch Friday: **April 10th @ Noon**

Church Library

(2nd Floor McCord Bldg)

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



Margaret's Memories Box Making



Saturday, April 11
Drop-in between 10-2
Room 302

Help assemble bereavement
boxes for local hospitals.



The church office
will be closed on
Monday, April 6th.

QUARTERLY giving statements

WILL BE SENT OUT IN APRIL
PLEASE BE SURE TO REVIEW YOUR STATEMENT

Thank you!

Save The Date

Chancel Choir & Chancel Ringers
Concert
with Mary Holladay & Brenda Scott

May 31, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.
RPUMC Sanctuary



"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

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RIVERSIDE PARK
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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
5 EASTER SUNDAY Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7 10:30 am Tai Chi 5 pm Girl Scouts 6pm SPR Meeting	8 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	9 11 am Circle of Hope 7 pm Tai Chi	10 12 pm Mental Health & Wholeness	11 10-12 Margaret's Memories Box Making
FAMILY PROMISE WEEK						
12 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	13	14 10:30 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Sisters of Service	15 11 am Circle of Joy & Peace 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	16 7 pm Tai Chi	17 Newsletter Deadline	18 9 am Men's Breakfast and Mother's Morning Off
19 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	20 6pm Trustees Meeting	21 10:30 am Tai Chi 4pm Finance Meeting 5 pm Girl Scouts 6 pm Church Council	22 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	23 7 pm Tai Chi	24	25
26 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	27	28 10:30 am Tai Chi	29 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	30 7 pm Tai Chi		



APRIL

Birthdays

- 1st Charlene Grand
Olivia Take
- 3rd Lorie Anderson
Tre Devine
John Wascom
- 4th Fred Lee
Eli Monk
- 6th Kaylee Drewry
Mateo Hernandez
- 8th Theresa Keatley-Miller
- 14th Peggy McCord
- 15th Yvonne Sloan
- 17th Ellie Roukey
- 18th Sarah Brinson
- 19th Tammy Morreale
- 20th Frances Mathews
- 21st Carole Rooks
Tim Ware
Nieve Wilbourne
- 22nd Latoya McCorkle
- 24th Noah Meyer
- 26th Lib Creech
Beth Joyner
- 27th Millie Russell
- 28th Kris Gunby
- 29th Hal Catlin
Rhys Weisman
Michael Whiteman
- 30th Suzanne Brooks-Cope

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

March Committee Meetings:

SPR Committee
Tuesday, April 7 at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees
Monday, April 20 at 6:00 p.m.

Finance Committee
Tuesday, April 21 at 4:00 p.m.

Church Council
Tuesday, April 21 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
- † Carole Rooks
- † Fred Russell
- † Carol Stelly

