



# May 2026 Riverside Reporter

Join us in May:

May 3<sup>rd</sup> -Communion Sunday

May 10<sup>th</sup> -Mother's Day

May 17<sup>th</sup> -Graduation Sunday

May 31<sup>st</sup>  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Pancake Breakfast  
4pm Community Concert

After Easter, I had the gift of spending a few days with my clergy covenant group—women who have known me and walked with me in prayer and ministry since before my ordination.

Both days, we woke early together to pray and watch the sunrise. The first one was glorious. One of those breathtaking, Easter-adjacent bursts of light with color spilling across the horizon (the kind that would be great to use in a sermon series about “Resurrection in Real Life”) but I didn’t get any photos that morning, so I planned to snag one the next day.

But the next morning was covered in clouds.

Still, we used the time to pray. And we watched. And we waited.

And—of course—the sun rose anyway.

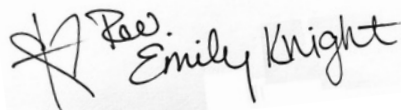
Far more beautiful than we expected, the sunrise we doubted ended up being more meaningful.

Even when we could not clearly see it, light was breaking through. Slowly, steadily, faithfully. The sunrise reminded me that God is always at work beyond what we can immediately perceive. Resurrection power is often quiet before it is visible. It moves beneath the surface long before it is seen in full light.

Even when the future feels uncertain, or the path ahead feels hidden, we trust in the God who raised Jesus from the dead—the God who is still bringing life where we only see clouds.

This truth has felt especially personal in this season as I share my gratitude for being re-appointed to serve this church for another year. I do not take that gift lightly. I am thankful for the trust you place in me, for the shared ministry we continue to build together, and for the ways God is already at work among us—often in ways we are still learning to see.

Resurrection in real life means this: God is not finished. Not with us. Not with this church. Not with our stories. Even when we cannot yet see the full sunrise, we can trust the light is already on its way.

  
Rev. Emily Knight

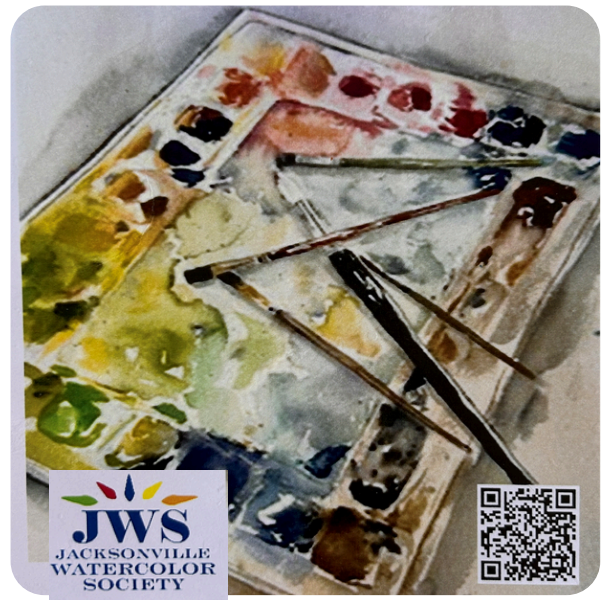
# Palm Sunday & Easter 2026

Thank you to everyone who helped and served!!



## 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](http://www.jacksonvillewatercolorsociety.org).



## Thank you, Laurie!

After nearly a decade of faithful service, we share that Laurie Mullis will be retiring from her role as cook for our Wednesday evening meals at the end of May.

Since 2016, Laurie has helped sustain an important part of our church's life together. Over the years, Wednesday dinners have grown and changed—especially during the pandemic, when this ministry became a vital way for us to serve our neighbors and provide meals for those in need. Through it all, Laurie has worked behind the scenes to prepare and serve food for large numbers of people, a task that requires dedication, resilience, and care. We are grateful for the role she has played during this significant season in the life of our church. Please join us in thanking Laurie for her years of service and in wishing her well in her retirement.



## Family Promise

A HUGE thank you to everyone who joined together to provide the evening meals for Family Promise on Easter week.

The residents enjoyed the variety! From Easter Ham to Taco Tuesday – from Yummy Fried chicken to Pizza/popcorn and a movie night. And delicious home-made deserts.

**You are APPRECIATED!!**

Riverside Park UMC's next rotation with Family Promise is set for the week of September 13th. Contact Brenda Chapman for more information.



# FIRST FRIDAY FRIENDS

May Event: Magic Tricks by Rick Devine

Monthly senior  
gathering:  
May 1st @11 a.m.



## First Friday Friends

Did you know there is a Magician in our membership? It is true! On May 1st, Rick Devine will share magic tricks with the First Friday Friends. You don't want to miss this event. We will enjoy the tricks and then have a nice lunch. This is the last event until September, when we will come together again, so Don't Miss It!

## United Methodist Men

The UMM is going bowling on Saturday, May 16 from 10 am to 12 pm at the Batt Family Fun Center located at 1838 Cassat Avenue. The cost is \$25 for shoes and ball. Come join us.

## United Methodist Men are going BOWLING!

Join the fun at  
Batt Family Fun Center  
1838 Cassat Ave.

\$25 per bowler

May 16th 10 am - 12 pm



# PANCAKE BREAKFAST

**HOSTED BY: UMM**  
**Sunday, May 31 @ 10am**  
**RHAMES FELLOWSHIP HALL**

## 5th Sunday Pancakes

The UMM is hosting the Fifth Sunday Pancake Breakfast on May 30 in the Fellowship Hall at 10 am between services. All of the collection is given to support the Methodist Children's Home.

## Circle of Joy and Peace

In April, the Circle of Joy and Peace continued our card ministry for those unable to attend services in person. We also made charitable donations for Baby Luv; Margaret's Memories; Hubbard House; and Trinity Lutheran Food Bank.

*Front row (l-r): Linda Robbins,  
Harriett Thurgood, Zada Stroble*

*Back row (l-r): Elizabeth Coley,  
Emily Rehberg, Bettye Stilley*

**Next Gathering:  
11:00 a.m., May 13, at a local restaurant**





## Hospitality Team Dinner in June

Save the date for a Hospitality Dinner:  
5:30 PM, Tuesday, June 30, 2026.

Picnic at Riverside Park, hotdogs, hamburgers, ice cream, all the favorites to remind us of simpler times, family, and friends! Come fellowship with us and experience the lazy days of summer!



## May Women's Circle Meetings

### **Sisters of Service**

Tuesday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m.  
in the parlor for a craft night

### **Circle of Joy & Peace**

Wednesday, May 13 at 11:00 a.m.  
at a local restaurant

### **Circle of Hope**

Thursday, May 14 at 11:00 a.m.  
in the Fellowship Hall



## Wednesday Night Ministries

In Matthew 25, Jesus teaches that caring for those in need, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and clothing those without, is central to our faith. Each Wednesday, we share food, drinks, and most importantly, our love and prayers. What began with socks and T-shirts has grown into a ministry providing essential needs.

Thank you for making this possible through your prayers and generosity.

Last month, volunteers prepared 100 Easter goodie bags with chocolate popcorn from Peterbrooke Chocolatiers!

### **Wednesday Ministry Meeting:**

3:00 PM on May 20. Topics include weather plans, safety procedures, kitchen use, and community partnerships for food assistance.

**Current Needs: Dark-colored T-shirts, athletic shoes, and reusable water bottles.**



## Celebration from the Chancel Choir

The RPUMC Chancel Choir has been invited to sing at the American Choral Directors Association's Florida Conference!

Our wonderful Chancel Choir will be traveling to Orlando in late October to sing at the ACDA keynote concert in downtown Orlando. The "faith-based" program will include:

- a well-known Episcopal choir from Orlando
- a synagogue choir from Gainesville
- an AME church from Lakeland
- and are working to locate an Islamic call-to-worship representation.
- Dr. Jeffery Ames as our scheduled keynote speaker. He will emcee the concert, and has prepared god-centric remarks appropriate to all faiths.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our singers to expand their ministry outside our four walls.

**Please plan on joining the choir for a free community concert on Sunday, May 31st @ 4:00 pm in our sanctuary.**

Please congratulate our hard-working and talented singers!



**HOW**  
*Sweet*  
**THE SOUND**  
*a concert featuring our:*

Chancel Choir  
Chancel Ringers  
Austin/Cornel Zimmer  
Pipe Organ  
and the  
1876 Steinway  
"Centennial" Grand Piano

Sunday, May 31, 2026 ~ 4:00 p.m.  
Riverside Park United Methodist Church  
819 Park Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204

John Larsen, Director  
Mary Holladay & Brenda Scott, Organists



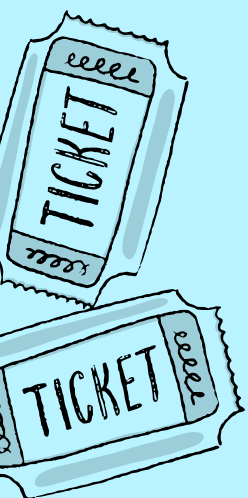
## After-Concert Dinner (dinner tickets coming soon).

**Join us for dinner at 5:30 PM after the May 31 concert.**

The menu includes chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, peach cobbler with vanilla ice cream and drinks, but space and food is limited.

To help us plan, dinner attendance will be ticketed (suggested \$8 donation per meal).

Be looking for more details on how to reserve dinner tickets for you and any guests you may want to invite.



# RPUMC VBS ON THE ROAD with Jesus

Block Parties and the Bible



Summer 2026

Join us for faith, fun & adventure,  
Location: A neighborhood near you!

Last year, we hosted VBS as “pop-up” gatherings at local playgrounds and city parks.

This year, we’re taking that idea on the road. We’re planning a road-trip style VBS where church families can host a neighborhood gathering right in their driveway, inviting friends and neighbors to join in. Families who sign up will receive the time and location for each stop along the way.

Every gathering will include snacks, games, and a Bible story centered on moments when Jesus met people on the road—like the walk to Emmaus or the story of the Good Samaritan on the road to Jericho.

Sign Up Here to be part of the roadtrip



## Child/Youth Protection Policy Training

All keyholders, staff, and volunteers who work with children are required to attend.

Sunday, May 3rd  
10 am or 12 pm  
Rhames Fellowship Hall

Please contact the church office if you are unable to attend one of the sessions on May 3rd.

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026 - 10 AM - 12 PM  
VIA ZOOM - ALL ARE INVITED

Generosity

AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:  
LED BY REVS. MEREDITH MCNABB & ED NEW

ACTS 2:42-47

REGISTER  
NOW



Some members of our RPUMC stewardship team will attend the district gathering, “**Generosity as a Spiritual Discipline,**” on Saturday, May 2nd. You can join too!

Also, mark your calendars for a district gathering on **Tuesday, May 26 at 9 AM for a virtual tour to Rwanda with our Zoe Empowers kids.**

## Margaret's Memories Update

- Memory boxes have been donated to Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, Southside & Nassau; UF Flagler & Downtown NICU. A special thank you to the volunteers that have been able to deliver them!
- A memory box was mailed to Phoenix, AZ for a loss that occurred in the home setting. A family member contacted Margaret's Memories for assistance.
- At our recent box making event, we assembled 73 memory boxes. Thank you to everyone that was able to attend. Without volunteers this ministry could not happen.
- If you have been trained to quality control --- I could use your help! I have three facilities that require memory boxes.
- I assisted as an instructor at BMC Clay in March for Resolve Through Sharing Bereavement Training: Perinatal Death. The class provides important information for caregivers that work with families of loss.
- I will be attending the Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance conference in New Orleans in the spring of 2026. I have been blessed with a donation from The Amanda Bethany Strong Memorial Foundation and a stipend from The Baptist Foundation that has covered conference fees, hotel, and travel expenses.

If you quilt, knit, or crochet we need large blankets for boys & girls. For more information email Nicole at [margaretsmemories@hotmail.com](mailto:margaretsmemories@hotmail.com) or call the church office at 904-355-5491. You can also visit us on the web at [www.margaretsmemories.org](http://www.margaretsmemories.org) and "like" us on FaceBook!



## Care Team: Connecting the Body of Christ

RPUMC's "Care Team," led by Yvonne Sloan, lovingly connects with our home-bound church members through cards, check-ins, and small gifts. In April, they sent magnets (shown here to the right) with Easter cards and are preparing painted stones (with May flowers) for this month. If you're interested in joining the team or would like to send homemade items to our home-bound members, please reach out!



## The Lyn Lewis Memorial Fund

We are grateful to share that a new memorial fund has been established in loving memory of Marilyn "Lyn" Hitchcock Lewis. Honoring Lyn's passion for children and education, this fund will support ministry projects and needs that nurture faith, learning, and participation among children in our church. We give thanks for Lyn's life and the lasting impact her legacy will continue to have on future generations!

# A Note from the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

April 19th was Announcement Sunday--the day when we announce the details of any pastoral changes that will be occurring throughout the conference, and I was thrilled to share that Bishop Berlin and his cabinet determined that Pastor Emily will be remaining at Riverside Park United Methodist Church!

Pastor Emily has served our church for ten years, and we are blessed to have her for another.

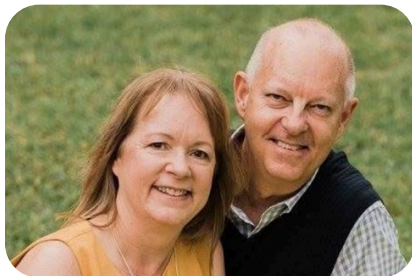
During her ten-year tenure Emily has delivered over a 1,000 sermons about God's grace, love and forgiveness; baptized many of our children and grandchildren; confirmed our youth and young adults; helped us say goodbye to our loved ones; has visited countless members of our congregation who are shut in or hospitalized, has laughed with us, cried with us and prayed with us when we needed it most, helped many of us through the split of the Methodist church, and I am personally grateful for her guidance and support during that challenging time. Additionally, Riverside Park welcomed 200 new people, many of whom joined our church family.

The Wednesday Night Ministry has exploded, Margaret's Memories has flourished just to name a few. This is certainly an affirmation of her ministry and a time for celebration of the overall ministry of our church. We are blessed to have Pastor Emily and will stand by her as we fulfill our mission and purpose together by empowering others to an abundant life in Christ.

Blessings, Kit Thomas, SPRC Chair



## Welcome New Members



**Faith & Warren Jones**



**Melissa, Kent, & McKenna Peckenpaugh**



**Susan Siegel**



**John & Mary Jane Simpson**

*Welcome*  
to the Riverside  
Park UMC family!



**Jill & Eric Walker**

### **News from the Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee is pleased to share that after many dedicated hours from dedicated people, our budget for the year is completed and has been approved by Church Council.

We have also updated our **reimbursement policy**. If you need to make a purchase on behalf of the church, please contact the church office in advance to receive the current policy and tax exemption certificate. Following this process helps us remain compliant with financial guidelines and ensures accurate recordkeeping.

**Quarterly giving statements** were sent out in early April. Please review your statement and contact the finance team in the church office with any questions.

In addition, we want to share an update regarding **online giving**. In 2025, over \$3,600 was spent on credit card and ACH processing fees. After careful consideration, the Finance Committee has explored options that allow contributors to help offset these costs. Beginning June 1, when using MyWell, our online giving platform, the option to cover processing fees will be the default option. Users will have the ability to opt out if they prefer.

### **Trustees: Moving Forward with Two Key Projects**

The Trustees are moving forward with two significant projects that have been in development for quite some time. One of these is a **new partnership with the Riverside Arts Market, through which we will make our church kitchen available to small businesses** in need of an affordable commercial kitchen space. We will begin on a small scale and adapt as we learn, and we're grateful that this initiative received unanimous approval at our April Charge Conference meeting.

We are also preparing to introduce **paid parking for non-ministry use of our lot, starting June 1st** as new signage is completed. Please know that parking will always remain free for church services, events, and campus activities—including Sundays, weddings, funerals, and ministry gatherings. **We will ensure that church members and guests can continue to park and participate just as they always have.**

For non-ministry use, parking will be managed through Park Thrive using QR codes and signs in the parking lot. When the lot is reserved for church activities, it will not be available for public parking. We are putting simple processes in place to ensure that anyone attending a church-related gathering (planned or unplanned) can park without difficulty.

This effort is part of the Trustees' commitment to care well for our campus. We will be paying close attention as we begin, and if this approach does not serve our church and community well, we can step away from it at any time.

# Child/Youth Protection Policy Training

**Sunday, May 3rd**  
**10 am -or- 12 pm**  
**Rhames Fellowship Hall**

Required for all keyholders & staff,  
and all youth or children volunteers

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WHOLENESS

*next gathering: May 8<sup>th</sup> @ Noon*  
Monthly conversations in the church  
office library (2<sup>nd</sup> floor McCord)  
Second Friday of every month



## May 3rd YOUNG ADULT LUNCH

JUST AFTER TRADITIONAL WORSHIP  
(MEET AT THE SANCTUARY STEPS)



We celebrate graduates on  
**Sunday, May 17th.**  
Send photos, names and info.  
to Joye by May 10th at  
[j.hampton@riversideparkumc.com](mailto:j.hampton@riversideparkumc.com)

## New Online STUDY

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*  
Sundays @6pm through May 17th  
(ONLINE via zoom)

REGISTER HERE  
FOR MORE INFO



## THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON



A MEDITATION ON FATHERS,  
BROTHERS, AND SONS  
HENRI J. M. NOUWEN  
AUTHOR OF *BOUND HEALER*

Sunday Morning Study:  
Henri Nouwen's,  
The Return  
of the Prodigal Son

Sundays @10-11am  
Room #202

Led by Rev. David Holladay

## Fuel the Mission

Give Online:

[RPUMC.mywell.org](http://RPUMC.mywell.org)

(Please select ACH transfers  
for lower processing fees.)

—or—

Text "RPUMC" to 40101



Thank you!

## Our RPUMC Mission:

**"To empower  
others to live  
life abundantly  
in Christ."**



## NE District Shared Mission:



**Virtual Trip to Rwanda via ZOOM**  
Meet our Group of Children & Youth

Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 9am

Learn More & Pray  
for our Zoe Empowers Group:  
[www.flumc.org/zoe-empowers-nedistrict](http://www.flumc.org/zoe-empowers-nedistrict)





*"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**


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**Church Office: (904) 355-5491 [www.riversideparkumc.com](http://www.riversideparkumc.com)**

**Church Office Hours:**  
**Monday - Thursday 9-3:30, Friday 9-1**

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RIVERSIDE PARK  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH





# May BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Beckham Linden  
Darren Nettles  
Maisie Remo
- 4th Elouise Pearsall
- 10th Judy Marks  
Anne McVay
- 12th Jon Brockel
- 14th Kevin Round
- 16th Brenda Helveston  
Tallulah Henderson
- 17th Michael Hodgkin
- 18th Wyatt Snipes
- 20th Hudson Gunby
- 21st Quinton Scott
- 23rd Debra Whitaker
- 28th Linda LaBell
- 29th Brian Alvarado
- 30th Landon Kessenger  
Anthony Owens

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

## May Committee Meetings:

**SPR Committee**  
Tuesday, May 5 at 6:00 p.m.

**Board of Trustees**  
Monday, May 18 at 6:00 p.m.

**Finance Committee**  
Tuesday, May 19 at 4:00 p.m.

**Church Council**  
Tuesday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: FINANCE COMMITTEES MEETINGS  
HAVE CHANGED TO THE 3<sup>RD</sup> 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



All worship services are streamed live on Facebook and YouTube. Please check the website or the RPJMC 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 <b>11 am First Friday Friends</b>	2
3 <b>COMMUNION</b> Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am <b>10 am Child Protection Training</b> 10 am Sunday School/Groups <b>12 pm Child Protection Training</b> <b>12 pm Young Adult Brunch</b> <b>6 pm Book Study</b>	4	5 10:30 am Tai Chi 5 pm Girl Scouts <b>6 pm SPR Meeting</b>	6 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	7 7 pm Tai Chi	8 <b>12 pm Mental Health &amp; Wholeness</b>	9
10 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups <b>6 pm Book Study</b>	11	12 10:30 am Tai Chi <b>6:30 pm Sisters of Service</b>	13 <b>11 am Circle of Joy &amp; Peace</b> 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	14 <b>11 am Circle of Hope</b> 7 pm Tai Chi	15	16 <b>9 am Men's Bowling Outing</b>
17 <b>GRADUATE SUNDAY</b> <b>Newsletter Deadline</b> Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers <b>6 pm Book Study</b>	18 <b>6 pm Trustees Meeting</b>	19 10:30 am Tai Chi <b>4 pm Finance Meeting</b> 5 pm Girl Scouts <b>6 pm Church Council</b>	20 <b>3:00 pm WNM Meeting</b> 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	21 7 pm Tai Chi	22	23
24 Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am 10 am Sunday School/Groups 5 pm Chancel Ringers	25 <b>MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY</b> <b>Office closed</b>	26 9 am Virtual Trip to Rwanda/Zoe Empowers	27 5:15 pm Free Dinners 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	28 7 pm Tai Chi	29	30
31 <b>5TH SUNDAY</b> Sunday Worship @ 9 am & 11 am <b>10 am Pancake Breakfast</b> <b>4 pm How Sweet the Sound</b> <b>5:30 pm Concert Dinner</b>						