

MAY 2024

# The Messenger

First United Methodist Church of Riverside  
4845 Brockton Ave. Riverside, CA 92506

## Thank You Everyone!

Dear church family,

I am truly grateful to God that I am back in church now, after having enjoyed my wonderful and meaningful "Formational and Spiritual Growth Leave"! It was a great time of retreat, rest, and recharge for my ministry and life journey.

I cannot thank you - the whole congregation - enough for your complete support, overflowing love, and fervent prayers always, especially during my personal reflection and study time. I have missed you all - a loving community of faith! And I'm so happy to see you all!

You are an amazing and faithful congregation! I express my deepest gratitude to everyone in the congregation, all the church leaders, committees, and ministry teams for your faithfulness, commitment, and hard work!

My special thanks to all the inspiring guest preachers and speakers for filling in the pulpit for me during my absence. Thanks to the three amazing, retired UMC pastors who preached: Rev. Roy Riggs, Rev. Beverly Devine, and Rev. Jaeman Lim. Thanks to our East District Superintendent, Rev. Moonyoung Lee, and Pastor Mateo Mamea (Borrego Springs UMC).

Moreover, thanks to all the wonderful lay speakers who shared their heartfelt messages: Dr. Joan Roberts, Dr. Lucinda Edmunds, David & Sarah Overton Fraser, Dr. Lynn Wright, Regan Pope, and Erin Hawkins (Executive Director of Connectional Ministries at California-Pacific Conference). Also, thanks to all the five Lenten Soup Supper speakers: Mike Alfred, Sophie Weiss, Lyn Knowles, Dr. Selin Nielsen (Co-Founder and CEO of Glocally Connected), and Carolyn Greywood.

As you are aware, the delayed 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church is happening in Charlotte, North Carolina, from April 23 through May 3. Already the delegates have lifted the ban on LGBT clergy by an overwhelming margin and more votes will come in the next few days. It is a new day in the UMC! Please keep the conference delegates in your prayers for God's discernment, love and direction for strengthening all United Methodist congregations. More details are on page 11.

*(cont.)*



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First United

Methodist Church  
of Riverside

## Pastor's Message (cont.)

The Second Sunday (May 12) will be Ascension of Christ Sunday and Festival of the Christian Home. We will also celebrate Mother's Day.

On Pentecost Sunday (May 19), you are invited to wear red to signify and emphasize the coming of the Holy Spirit on this historic Birthday of the Church (also Heritage Sunday).

As I close my article, I would like to share with you a portion of the words of Jesus proclaimed to his beloved disciples, and these words still resonate among us:

**"You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another"** (John 15:16-17, NRSV).

Thanks be to God! Amen!

Love and Blessings,  
The Rev. J. T. Kim, Pastor

## Share Cookies for Moms



On Sunday, May 12 the Faith and Fellowship Committee will celebrate mothers with cookies on the patio.

Also, United Women in Faith have a surprise for all moms. They will be giving away jewelry. Come celebrate sacrificial love, maternal love, tough love.

On this particular second Sunday, there will be no lunch after church, so families will have time to gather at home.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Family Promise of Riverside

We will hear from Claire Jefferson-Glipa, director of Family Promise of Riverside, during our worship service on Sunday, June 23.

FUMCOR is a partner with Family Promise of Riverside, a nonprofit organization that coordinates shelter and food for homeless families with children. The families are currently spending nights in our Sunday school rooms.

Contact Kris Lovekin if you are called to work with homeless families in some way. They always need gift cards. We are also looking for someone who likes to organize food deliveries.

### Summer is Coming!

It's not too early to look for sales on school supplies we will distribute at our third annual Bye Bye Summer Bash on July 27.

We will distribute backpacks filled with supplies, and hope you can help by donating the following items:

- Post it notes
- Subject Dividers (for use in a three ring binder)
- Wide Ruled spiral bound notebooks
- Individually wrapped sets of index cards
- Highlighters
- Boxes of crayons.

We offer gently used children's books at a table for children to choose a book (or books) to take home. Thank you for your donations so far! Please bring your contributions to the church office or leave them in the narthex for collection.

Thank you,  
FUMCOR's Outreach Team



# Vacation Bible School

June 3rd-7th, 9am-12pm



## Volunteers Needed

- Snacks
- Science
- Stories
- Arts and Crafts
- Registration
- Publicity

# For VBS, Let's Camp!

Campfires and s'mores are the theme for Vacation Bible School at FUMCOR, set for Monday, June 3 to Friday, June 7.

Geared for TK to sixth grades, Camp Firelight invites children on a Summer Camp adventure with storytelling, science, games, crafts and snacks.

Children meet Lu the lightening bug and counselors who will help them trust God, face their fears and do great things in God's name.

Cost is \$20 for the first child and \$10 for each additional child in your family or your carpool.

Invite your neighbors and your friends.

To register, scan the QR code at left or go to our website at <https://firstchurchriverside.org>

If you have any questions, contact Christina Graves at 951-212-5725 or [childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org](mailto:childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org)



Scan to register



There will be special prayer walk to bless the space for VBS



# Gifts and Graces

## Funding our Mission

By Kris Lovekin



Marcia and  
Kelly, to the  
rescue!

## The Dynamic Duo Empowers Fellowship and Learning

When it comes to potlucks or children's events, two volunteers at FUMCOR take the cake. Sometimes they bake the cake. Sometimes they organize the games. And for sure you see them hightail it out of the sanctuary after children's moments, leading and keeping up with our energetic group of youngsters.

The dynamic duo of Kelly Weakly and Marcia Bales developed over time. They are a powerful force at church, applying their gifts and talents consistently to create a church family. They teach Sunday School, they organize Faith and Fellowship events, they cook and teach and play and join the conga line at Halloween Hop.

Both lifelong United Methodists, they met at FUMCOR after their families settled in the Riverside area. They both say our church's strong preschool was the first draw.

Kelly's home church as a younger person was Aldersgate UMC in Tustin, and it was tempting to keep driving into Tustin for Sunday services. But once she had a job at the Riverside County Office of Education, she and husband Kirk made the switch. "Kaley, Kyle and Kelsy all went to FUMPS," said Kelly, who is now celebrating her growing clan with weddings of her adult children and baptisms of her grandchildren.

Marcia grew up as a United Methodist in St. Paul, Indiana and came out to Riverside in 1985 with her husband Greg. Even before they had kids they liked the idea of a strong preschool program. Samantha and Jonathan Bales were active in UMYF, and have now both relocated to North Carolina.

Marcia plans to join them there in the near future. Her husband died in 2008 and she wants to live near her children and two grandchildren while the grandchildren are still young. She has already resigned from Kaiser, where she worked as a nurse. But soon she faces a wrenching goodbye to FUMCOR and the end of a fun dynamic duo act with Kelly. They don't even like talking about an end to the fun.

They bonded over the founding of Faith and Fellowship group, which puts on events like the baked potato bar, the Christmas brunch and the upcoming Mother's Day cookies and Father's Day cake walk. They are of one mind on many things.

"People seem to enjoy the conversation," Marcia said about Faith and Fellowship events. "That is the Methodist thing. To me, the church is a second family..." "And we want to feed them properly," Kelly said, laughing as she finished the thought.

Their mission is to create a sense of family, so that folks feel they belong to somebody. One meaningful activity was taking Christmas decor to people who couldn't get out. They would break up into different cars and go to different houses. "We would go out to a retirement community and give them a little something," Marcia said. "It was fun."

Both Kelly and Marcia cooked for Hunger Ministry before the pandemic. Kelly also volunteers for VBS and serves on the FUMPS board of directors, taking over leadership of the board right before COVID.

"The preschool has done so many wonderful things for so many generations," she said. "FUMPS is such a staple in Riverside and that is pretty amazing."

# Uplift Youth Group

Wednesday nights from 5:30 to 7 pm.

May 1 "Fiesta" and May 15 "Welcome Summer!"

We'll be celebrating those youth who are promoting and graduating.

Sunday school sessions are held twice a month, specifically tailored for the growth and development of our older youth. Sessions will be held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month. Don't miss this opportunity for meaningful growth and fellowship! Meet in the Narthex after Children's Moment.



## Swim and BBQ

All children and youth are invited with their families, to a pool party from 12 to 3 pm Saturday, June 8 at the home of David Fraser and Sarah Overton-Fraser. Bring your own towel and a bag of chips or dessert to share.

Hamburgers, hotdogs, vegan burgers, fruit, and drinks will be provided. Please RSVP phone/text 951-265-5773 (Lucinda Edmunds).

Come celebrate the successful completion of the school year and VBS!

## More Morning Outs

Parents drop off their children ages 18 months to kindergarten for childcare from 9 am to 12 noon in Room 2. This Parents Morning Out program is expanding to three days a week, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays starting on May 21. Cost is \$25 per child with a discount for siblings.



Scan for  
registration

Christina Graves  
951-212-5725

# United Methodist Men

Scholarship Auction



Lynn Ashworth painted french horns

## Check Out Auction Items to Raise Money for Scholarships



The annual United Methodist Men Silent Auction begins on Sunday, May 5. First, take a look at the catalogue or just cruise by the display case in the education building. Were you wanting to learn a new instrument? Do you need a handmade scarf, or a pen and ink drawing of the pulpit, or a clock set in a piece of wooden history from the church? What about some luggage? Or maybe some jewelry or bedsheets?

Have you always wanted an original Lynn Ashworth water color? Do you need a box to carry your canaries? What about some electronic drone lights or toys?

There are more than 70 items in the auction this year. All proceeds will fund scholarships for students from our own church. The catalogue is being emailed to all members for your bidding fun. The action happens in May with final bids taken on June 2. The winners will be announced in June. For bidding, contact Greg Laird in the evening (951) 237-9567.



Take a peek as you go to the UMM Friday morning breakfast at 7 am. in Mary's Kitchen



# United Women in Faith

## A Big Thank You

Thank you to the many people who volunteered over several months to make this year's UWF Yard Sale a success! We raised \$1,000 for missions. You contributed items, volunteered many hours to organize, price, sort, shift, plan, execute and clean up as the Yard Sale Team! We value your time and energy. Bless you!



## Events and Meetings

- May 1 Executive Meeting (Zoom) - 1 pm
- May 2 Social 6:45 p.m. / \*UWF Bible Study (Zoom) 7 pm
- May 9 Social 6:45 p.m. / \*UWF Bible Study (Zoom) 7 pm  
*Next Bible Study begins in September.*
- May 21 Lunch Bunch at the Crest Cafe 11 am  
(5225 Canyon Crest Drive #40)
- May 25 Serendipity Circle (Chandler Lounge) 10 am
- May 28 Citrus Circle (Chandler Lounge) 7 pm

For more information contact:  
Pam Conlin 951-237-5470

If you are writing a check to UWIF/UMW for pledges or donations would you please make them payable to:  
United Methodist Women



Would you like to knit or crochet prayer shawls for our Prayer Shawl Ministry?

Call Pam  
951-237-5470

# Prayers & Praises

## Prayer Concerns

Jim Conlin, Virginia Bahnsen, Michael Thompson,  
Norma Nelson, Pat Williams, Lisa Thomas,  
Kat Franklin, Mary Negrete, Ron Tovar,  
Jim Ashworth, Kim Austin, Linda Rydzik,  
Richard Austin, family of Elizabeth Davis,  
family of Stanley Thompson, family of Bessie Ridley



Bessie Ridley lived to be 104. Her memorial service will be 11:30 am May 15 with a reception to follow in Fellowship Hall. She is pictured here on the 150th anniversary of the church.

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

Please join with us in giving thanks for the birthdays and anniversaries in our congregation.

### May Birthdays

- 1 Sarah Overton-Fraser
- 2 Bob Banks
- 2 Clayton Erickson
- 4 Marge Baillod
- 5 Samuel Britain
- 10 Cindy Lonsdale
- 12 Lee Ann Salmon
- 13 Jennifer Mahl
- 14 George Callow
- 15 Rebel Harrell
- 15 Joan Roberts
- 17 Roger Murray
- 17 Erika Noble
- 18 Jonathan Bales
- 18 Karen Wilson
- 19 Derrick Austin
- 21 Chandra Roberts
- 25 Beth Waddell
- 25 Lynn Wright
- 27 Jocelyn Williams
- 28 Garrett Hough
- 28 David Vela

### May Anniversaries

- 18 Ruben and Robin Renteria
- 21 Jaeman and Angela Lim
- 23 Uldis and Peggy Stepe
- 30 Tina and Tom Fletcher

Join the  
church on  
welcoming  
Sunday,  
May 26



## On Sunday, May 19 we will celebrate Pentecost

*When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak. -- Acts 2:1-4*



# Congrats to Karen Wilson



After eight years as director of First United Methodist Pre School, and 12 years teaching before that, Karen Wilson will retire at the end of this school year. Thanks to all the parents, children, teachers and supporters who attended the April 26 FUMPS open house and reception. We will recognize Karen in church for her dedicated leadership this Sunday. She leaves a great legacy, reflected in the lives of young people from all over the community. She wanted to send her thanks to the congregation for all the support.



The FUMPS board includes (left to right) Jamie Packwood, Kelly Weakly, Karen Wilson, Loretta Cudney, Lucinda Edmunds, and Jolyn MacArthur.



Members of the church come out to support Karen at the reception on April 26.

# Bell Choir Concert June 9



Mark your calendar for this year's annual Bell concert. We will be ringing at 5 pm Sunday, June 9 in the sanctuary.

This year, you will hear our adult bell choir, The Allegro Ringers and our youth ringers. In addition, we will be joined by our organist Robert Phillips and our praise band, The Response.

The concert is free. Gather your friends and families and join us for an exciting hour of music.



## Ongoing Events

- Sunday Worship: 10 am
- Sunday School for Children: 10:15 am
- Sunday School for Older Youth 10:15 am (Narthex (second and fourth Sundays typically))
- First Sundays-Holy Communion.
- Third Sundays - Response Band leads Worship
- Bell choir rehearsal: Tuesdays, 7 pm
- The Response rehearsal, Wednesdays, 6:30 pm
- Adult choir rehearsal: Thursdays, 7 pm
- Men's Friday Prayer Breakfasts 7 am

## Need to Reach Us?

First United Methodist Church of Riverside  
4845 Brockton Avenue, Riverside, CA 92506  
(951) 683-7831 (Mon to Fri 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)  
secretary@firstchurchriverside.org

## Church Staff

Rev, J.T. Kim, Senior Pastor  
pastorjtkim@firstchurchriverside.org

Christina Graves, Children and Youth  
childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Becky Ruiz, Office Manager  
rruiz@firstchurchriverside.com

Beverly Devine, Secretary  
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Yvonne Flagg, Choir Director  
choirdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Gayla Lonsbery, Bell Director  
belldirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Robert Phillips, Organist  
organist@firstchurchriverside.org

Karen Wilson, Preschool Director  
fumps@sbcglobal.net

Jesse Ruiz, Custodial Manager  
jruiz28880@aol.com

Brad Tomlinson, Campus Supervisor  
bradtomlinson4@yahoo.com



First United

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# Ban on Gay Clergy Struck Down



The Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé (left), Bishop Karen Oliveto (in blue jacket) and her wife, Robin Ridenour (front, center), join in embracing delegates and visitors at the 2024 United Methodist General Conference in Charlotte, N.C., after the conference voted to remove the denomination’s ban on the ordination of clergy who are “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” – a prohibition that dates to 1984. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

Heather Hahn

May 1, 2024 | CHARLOTTE, N.C. (UM News)

Key points:

- In an emotional morning, General Conference eliminated the ban on “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy.
- Following the vote at break, delegates and observers sang hymns in joy.
- General Conferences continues to quietly reverse some of The United Methodist Church’s longtime restrictions against LGBTQ members.
- More potential changes are to come.
- 

Without debate, General Conference has removed The United Methodist Church’s ban on the ordination of clergy who are “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” – a prohibition that dates to 1984. General Conference during the morning plenary approved the change alongside 22 pieces of legislation on the consent calendar, which allows delegates to pass multiple petitions in bulk if they have overwhelming support in legislative committee and have no budgetary or constitutional impact.

The vote on the consent calendar was 692-51, with approval at 93%.

Delegates and observers applauded after the vote.

Also on the consent calendar, delegates voted that superintendents are not to penalize clergy or churches for holding— or refraining from holding — same-sex weddings.

Another change approved exhorts the Council of Bishops to be inclusive of gender, race, ethnicity, age, people with disabilities, sexual orientation and economic condition in naming representatives to ecumenical organizations .

The legislation approved on this morning’s consent calendar continues the trend of this General Conference, which is quietly reversing some of The United Methodist Church’s longtime restrictions against LGBTQ members.

More potential changes are to come — keep up at [UMnews.org](https://www.umnews.org)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/40-year-ban-on-gay-clergy-struck-down>