

MARCH 2024

The Messenger

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

To Serve in a Broken World

By Kris Lovekin

*"The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
Psalm 34:18*

It was a softball.

That's what Brian Tomlinson thought as he searched our small chapel for what could have put a jagged hole in the robe of Jesus in the stained glass window above the altar.

In Brian's long tenure (20-plus years) as the chair of Trustees, this was the seventh broken stained glass window.

Yes, we have insurance, but what kind of person does this? While we don't know for sure, we can imagine that it is someone with a broken heart and a broken spirit.

This world is full of heartbreak: war, famine, racism, ethnic violence, corporate greed, pollution, domestic abuse. It is our assignment from God to try to comfort people who have been wounded, and to make the world more just so people are not wounded in the first place.

Dani Johnson-Cork remembers her mother, a civil rights leader who influenced her own daughters to pursue justice and as she taught what it means to live in a broken world.

"My mom, Miriam, also lovingly known as "Mimi," was born in Birmingham, Alabama. While a college student in North Carolina, at the inception of the Civil Rights Movement, Mimi took an active role in nonviolent assembly in Charlotte, Atlanta, and Birmingham." She helped integrate lunch counters and she was a speech writer with Dr. King and Medgar Evers.

Comfort can also be as simple as a visit and a smile. David Fraser brought comfort in the form of See's Candy to some of our our members who are at home because of age or illness. At Christmas he hand delivered boxes of chocolate to nine people who have not been able to get to church.

(cont.)



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Broken World (cont.)

"It was surprising to me how moved I felt because they were so grateful to see that we remembered them," he said.

David wants to expand the "Caring Ministry" of our church to make sure people don't feel forgotten. Maybe you will feel called to help him.

As Mike Alfred looked at the damaged window on a Sunday morning, he mourned the loss. But he saw it as a metaphor. We are all broken people, and yet God's grace repairs us. And our welcoming to others can repair those people as well.

Our window will be good as new in the next few months, like others before it. We will pay our deductible, and we will get it to experts who will remake those crushed pieces and press the design back together again.

That is what we can do, together, as we see a flaw in the world. Pick up that gift card, or visit at the hospital or take a casserole to someone in mourning.

Pastor Mateo Mamea, our former youth leader, will be our speaker on Sunday, March 10 and we will send him off to his church in Borrego Springs with gift cards and hygiene kits to be used in a ministry at the border with Mexico. As desperate people wait for asylum hearings, they are cold and hungry and they need to brush their teeth. They will feel God's love through us.

With our God, it is the little things that build up into a better world, a better and more beautiful design.

Let us listen for the next nudge from God to fix our broken world.

Thank you for all you are doing in the world. God sees you working. Just keep going.

"I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

John 16: v. 33 (Revised Standard Version)

Volunteer Opportunities

Family Promise is Back

First UMC is hosting Family Promise of Riverside, a nonprofit organization that coordinates shelter and food for homeless families with children.

On March 2 they will move into our Education building Sunday School rooms on the second floor from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. They always need gift cards, dinners and help in moving. The organization is having good success transitioning families to stable housing.

Contact Kris Lovekin if you are called to work with homeless families in some way.

A Sweet Fundraiser

See's candy boxes and eggs will be on sale after the Sunday Worship Service up until Easter, or as long as supplies last.

The box is \$11 per box, peanut butter or bordeaux eggs are \$8.50 each. They will fit nicely in an Easter Basket, and they will help close our budget deficit.



We Are Called to Caring

David Fraser will help to organizing and lead a Caring Ministry that offers visits and conversation with people who are homebound because of illness or age.

Come be a hero, providing an example of Christ's nurturing love. Volunteer to take a name and call or visit. Contact David Fraser on the patio or via email at frasoo@msn.com

Gifts and Graces

Funding our Mission

David Fraser, Finance



Responding to God's Call: Kevin Simpson

There are so many ways to respond to God's call to be generous in giving. Pledges and donations are many other ways to give. The Finance Committee will be writing about church members who give of their time and talents.

Today's volunteer:

Kevin Simpson

Kevin Simpson has been a member of FUMCOR since 1984. Kevin is the coordinator at FUMCOR of the annual CROP Walk for Hunger and he makes coffee and sets up the welcoming table after church.

Kevin was born in Sturgis, Kentucky. Raised a Presbyterian, but his visited the Methodist church with his grandmother and in college was most often attending a Methodist Church. When he came to Riverside to join the Chemistry faculty at UC Riverside he was drawn to FUMCOR because of its commitment to missions and social causes such as hunger and homelessness.

He participated in the CROP Walk first, and then took over leadership from Rudy Ruddell. Kevin recruits FUMCOR walkers, provides them with information about collecting sponsors, and provides support and encouragement on the day of the walk. Starting last year, FUMCOR has hosted the walk at our church. Many churches throughout Riverside participate in the walk. Volunteers register the walkers, collect the donations and tally the results for each team. They also provide refreshments.

Kevin started making coffee as a member of the newly formed Faith and Fellowship Committee in the mid-1990s. This took on a greater meaning for Kevin when he learned about the United Methodist Committee on Relief's Coffee Project, which started in 2002, to provide support for small farmers throughout the world. This support continues at FUMCOR through the purchase of "Fair Trade" coffee through Equal Exchange, an organization that buys directly from small-scale farmer cooperatives.

Kevin has served on numerous committees and projects during his years at FUMCOR. Kevin says that he has stayed involved because there are so many ways to serve. Kevin believes that there is a committee, a mission or an activity that would be just right for any church member to participate in. Kevin says, "It's a matter of finding your niche. Find that thing you find especially rewarding that allows you to express your faith."

March 17 is CROP Walk. See page 7 for more details



Donations Needed

- Krusteaz Pancake Mix
- Fully Cooked Sausage Links
- Pancake Syrup
- Canned Whipped Cream
- Butter
- Strawberries
- Blueberries

We need wrapped candies for the eggs. (no chocolate or peanuts please.)

Please bring donations to church on March 3.



Breakfast With Bunny

Our next family outreach event will be Breakfast with Bunny from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, March 9 in the Fellowship Hall. It will include a pancake breakfast prepared by the United Methodist Men, candy, crafts, games, a bounce house, and a special guest: Barbara J. Bunny.

We'll need many volunteers to get this up and running. Save the date and look for sign-ups after the service by the Fellowship Hall.

Invite neighbors and people you know from community groups.

If you have questions, contact Lee Ann Salmon at 951-906-6452.

Holy Week is Coming

On Palm Sunday children will carry palms into the sanctuary.

On March 28, Maundy Thursday, we join Wesley UMC at their church at 5770 Arlington Ave., Riverside.

On Good Friday, we invite Wesley to join us on Brockton Avenue. Rev. Roy Riggs will lead us.

Get ready for Easter Sunday morning on March 31 with a flower cross, a brass ensemble, bells and rejoicing. Our guest preacher is Erin Hawkins-Smith. Afterward, there will be a butterfly release and an Easter egg hunt for the children.





Lenten Supper Speakers

Our Lenten Dinner soup suppers continue in March, showcasing the gifts and graces that inspire our pursuit of our activities in the world. What about your faith has inspired you to create beauty or to understand scripture, or to reach out to others? We will also sing together and enjoy delicious soups brought by members of our fellowship group.

The Christian Education group will set the tables.

It all starts at 6 p.m.

Feb. 21: **Mike Alfred** talked about our stained glass windows.

Feb. 28: **Sophie Weiss** (at right) told us about painting in Italy.

March 6: **Lyn Knowles** will talk about weaving.

March 13: **Selin Yildiz Nielsen** will tell us about her passion for refugees.

March 20: **Carolyn Greyhouse** will talk about Heifer International.



Empty Nester's and More

The Empty Nester's Potluck is 5 pm Saturday, March 16.

On Sunday, March 17, Faith and Fellowship will offer the ever popular St. Patrick's Day Potato Bar. Join us!

Enrollment is Open for FUMPS

FUMPS is taking registration for enrollment now.

Founded in 1947, the preschool offers social, emotional, spiritual and developmental growth in a carefully planned program. It has always been an important part of our church. This program is child centered, licensed and accredited. The staff fosters and appreciates the individual child's natural curiosity, creativity and ability.

More here: <https://www.fumps.org/>



Wednesday Night Dinner

There are so many reasons to come to Youth Group!

It is a safe environment for children to come together in fellowship, positive peer influence, spiritual growth, and strengthening their moral foundation. We always encourage them in the ways of the Lord and talk about our week and positive sharing all together. Typically this is fifth grade and up, and families are welcome to stay.

We have dinner, devotional, and games that focus on teamwork. Sharing a meal w/your peers in God's house is always a good time :)

Spread the word about our U.P.L.I.F.T. youth group.

We meet upstairs in the Youth Room from 5:30 pm - 7 pm
on Wednesday, March 6 & 20.

Please join us for an UPLifting time!

More info: Christina Graves (951) 212-5725



Nurturing New Life

We have teeny caterpillars that have been eating and eating! Our little guests (pictured at left) are in the church office growing much longer and chubbier. Someday soon, they will cocoon and move into their butterfly "Pavillion."

We are excited to watch them progress to full-fledged Painted Lady butterflies (pictured above). Children can help us release them after church on Easter. Let's celebrate the joy of Easter together as we learn about God's incredible love for each and every one of us... even the little caterpillars!

People of All Ages!

Now is your opportunity to serve the Lord in a new way - as acolytes! Be the bearer of the Light of Christ into our worship space and our hearts and then, take the light out to the world.

You are welcome to give it a try! You may then decide how often you might choose to serve our congregation in this way. Your leadership brings us closer together as a faithful family.

For more information, contact the church office:
secretary@firstchurchriverside.org

FirstChurchRiverside.org



United Methodist Men

Sunday, March 10



Bring Dancing Shoes to the Next UMM Lunch

The next meeting of the United Methodist Men is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Sunday, March 10 in the Fellowship Hall with lunch made by Dave Fraser. Everyone is invited!

Terri and Dennis Whieldon (upper left in the picture above) have offered to give an introduction to their hobby of English country dancing from the time of the Revolutionary War.

The cost of the lunch is \$6 per person or \$15 per family.

If mornings are your thing, the UMM is meeting at 7 am. each Friday morning for a Prayer Breakfast. Gather in Mary's Kitchen for coffee, pastries, prayer and fellowship. All men are invited to join. Plans for the future include a "Silent Auction" in the Spring to raise money to support our FUMCOR student scholarship program. Please be thinking of items you may wish to donate.

First UMC Hosts CROP Walk March 17

First UMC will host the local CROP Hunger Walk at 1:30 pm on March 17.

The walk will begin and end at the church with First UMC Riverside with a break at Trinity Lutheran and then walk back. You can sign up as a FUMCOR team participant or donate at:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/team/fumcor>.

CROP Hunger Walks are community events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by local congregations to raise money and awareness for community and worldwide hunger relief efforts. Twenty-five percent of the money raised in the Riverside event will go directly to local hunger relief programs and food banks.

Contact info: Kevin Simpson (kevin.m.simpson@me.com)

Thank you for your support!





United Women in Faith



*Thank you! Thank you!
Thank you!*

United Women in Faith would like to thank all those who brought (and bought) baked goods in our Valentine's Day Bake Sale. We made over \$500 which will be a part of our annual mission giving in December.



United Women in Faith is scheduled to provide soup and bread for the March 20 Lenten Soup Dinner. We will need 12 soups and bread or crackers.
Look for the sign up sheet.

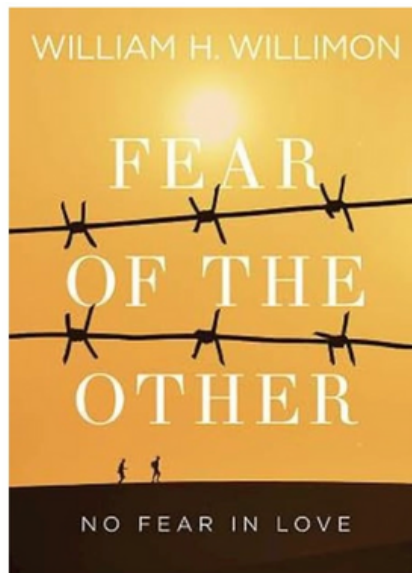
Events and Meetings

- March 6 - Executive Meeting: (Zoom) - 1 pm
 - March 14 - Lunch Bunch: Location TBA - 11 am
 - March 20 - Lenten Soup Supper (Fellowship Hall) - 5:30 pm
(Bring soup and bread)
 - March 26 - Citrus Circle (Zoom) - 7pm
Call Patti Gardenias (909) 648-1899 for Zoom invitation
 - March 30 - Serendipity Circle (Chandler Lounge) - 10 am
- For more information contact:
Lyn Knowles (951) 743-7490



SATURDAY, APRIL 27

We are joining our neighbors from the Woods Streets by having our sale on our FUMCOR front lawn. UWF invites you to participate by bringing or buying treasures on our front lawn. For more information: Pam Conlin (951) 237-5470



TRI CHURCH BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study will resume April 11 via Zoom. We will be starting with the book "Fear of the Other: No Fear in Love" by William H Willimon. For more information or Zoom invite call Lyn Knowles at (951) 743-7490.

Prayers & Praises

Joys & Concerns

Julie Williams, Virginia Bahnsen, Michael Thompson, James Nuchols, Norma Nelson, Mack and Elizabeth Davis, Jim Sizer, Pat Williams, Jim Ashworth, Kim Austin, Kat Franklin, and the family of Kay Otto.



"Christ is risen!"

"He is risen indeed!"

We repeat our Easter shouts of surprise and joy again and again, for news of your victory over powers of death and evil is news so startling, so amazing, so different from the news that bombards us day by day. Beyond our comprehension You startle us again and again with resurrection Life, bringing grace and hope and joy. You, in your risen power, are shaping all our days, and so we praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

-Christine Jerrett

Birthdays and Anniversaries

March Anniversaries

- 3/1 Steve and Kris Lovekin (38)
- 3/11 Mack and Elizabeth Davis (62)
- 3/16 Stan and Jackie Cook (49)



Greetings from Ecuador!

We've been focusing on the praise teams at each church. We have found that going to a rehearsal with the praise team is a great way to make personal connections. It adds an increased depth to our worship experience too.

Please pray for the Methodist churches here in Ecuador. They are few in number, and Methodism is not well-known or understood here, but there are many faithful Christians who are doing God's work in this country through them. We can see the glory of Jesus shine in their faces as they sing His praises.

Please continue to pray for us as we work with our leadership team to plan for and organize the praise team retreat that's coming up in April. Blessings, David and Shari Nelson

Follow the journey on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/shari.deberrynelson/



March Birthdays

- 3/2 Bob Bahnsen
- 3/4 Janis K. Duke
- 3/6 Greg Hough
- 3/7 Michiko Reyes
- 3/8 Bill Ashworth
- 3/8 Pat Williams
- 3/8 Sean Lomax
- 3/11 Myra Williams
- 3/11 Amit Roberts
- 3/11 Samir Roberts
- 3/16 Dorie L. Grimes
- 3/19 Yvonne I. Peters
- 3/20 Cindy Marr
- 3/21 Ronald L. Purkey
- 3/22 Claire Gorder
- 3/23 Chris Tupou
- 3/23 Carmen Lonsbery
- 3/23 Mary Boon
- 3/25 Carrie M. Renteria
- 3/25 Jeffrey Sluder
- 3/27 Danielle N. Johnson
- 3/28 Michelle E. Arguelles
- 3/29 Connie Smith
- 3/29 Peggy Stepe
- 3/31 Patty Binford
- 3/31 Gavin Hough



Highlighted Events

- March 2: "Is There Humor in Organ Music?" Concert - 7 pm
- March: See's Candy Sales on Sundays and Lenten Soup Suppers
- March 16: Empty Nesters' potluck and games - 5 pm
- March 17: Baked Potato Bar - 11 am
- March 17 Crop Walk 1:30 pm
- March 24: The Habit Fundraiser - 11 am

Ongoing Events

- Youth bell rehearsal; Sundays 9:30 am
- Sunday Worship: 10 am
- First Sundays-Holy Communion
- Sunday School for Children: 10:15 am
- Second Sunday-Men's Lunch w/speaker after worship
- Third Sundays - Faith and Fellowship Events after worship
- Bell choir rehearsal: Tuesdays, 7 pm
- Response Band rehearsals: Wednesdays, 6:30 pm
- Adult choir rehearsal: Thursdays, 7 pm
- Friday Mornings - United Methodist Men's Prayer Breakfast - 7 am



Dedications are being taken now for the Easter Lillies, to grace our sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31. Please complete this form and return it to the church office by Friday, March 8.

Cost of a potted Lily is \$15.00

Checks should be made out to First United Methodist Church (FUMCOR) and marked "Easter Flowers." Donors may pick up their plants after the Easter worship service.

Dedicated by: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

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

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On sabbatical

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Beverly Devine, Secretary
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Yvonne Flagg, Choir Director
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Gayla Lonsbery, Bell Director
belldirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Robert Phillips, Organist
organist@firstchurchriverside.org

Karen Wilson, Preschool Director
fumps@sbcglobal.net

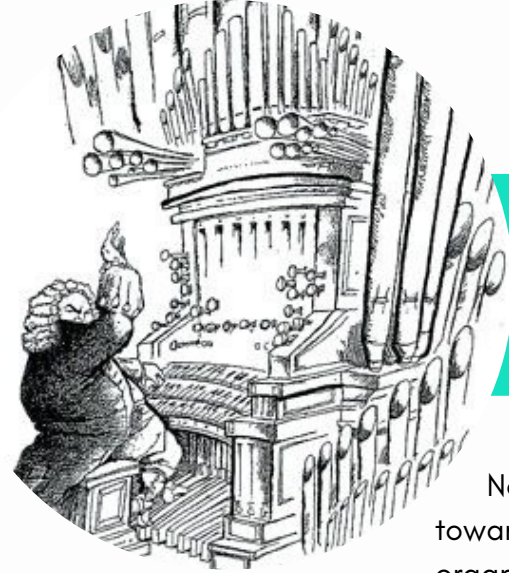
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jruiuz28880@aol.com

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bradtomlinson4@yahoo.com



First United

Methodist Church of Riverside



Lighten Up for Lent (musically speaking)

Now that the Christmas season is but a manic memory and we drift dolefully toward the impending penitence of Lent, we must ask ourselves, “Is there humor in organ music?” Yes, Virginia, there is!

Come to FUMCOR at 7 pm Saturday, March 2 and you’ll hear a centuries-spanning spectrum of musical madness proving that, indeed, organ composers often have a sense of humor and aren’t afraid to use it.

By Robert Phillips

The concert will include works by big names in classical music, such as Franz Joseph Haydn, who offers a tittering tribute to gossiping women (sexism was okay back then), and Johann Pachelbel (of “canon” fame), who pays homage to the bird with the most unimaginative call in the forest. Other selections on the program respectfully parody the styles of classical A-listers, answering such urgent questions as “What would ‘Bolero’ sound like if Mozart had written it?” and “Would J. S. Bach have won the Grammy for best soundtrack if he had composed the score for a certain Peter Sellers movie?” And somehow that prescient Mr. Bach seems to have written a trio based on a Jerome Kern tune from 1939!

And what of the least talented of Papa Bach’s 20-odd children, P.D.Q. Bach? In honor of the death, on January 16, of Peter Schickele, the scholar who spent decades tirelessly unearthing and championing the Bachian black sheep’s oeuvre, the program will feature P.D.Q.’s “Three Chorale-based Piecelets,” which are strange and, at times, nearly unplayable arrangements of highly unlikely cantus firmi.

Several animals, including a donkey, a squirrel, a wonky fish, an overheated songbird, and some trenchant hamsters, will make an appearance, and you’ll hear a wedding march that every organist wishes he could play, when confronted with a bridezilla, without jeopardizing his paycheck. Along the way, you’ll also encounter a “Suite for St. Wiesel-Popp,” a “Hornpipe Humoresque,” a “Ragtime Toccata,” a 12-bar blues played solely with the feet (pun intended), and a “Birthday Suit(e).”

As always, the concert is free, and a free-will offering will be collected to support the Organ Dedicated Fund. Imminent maintenance projects for our magnificent instrument include releathering wind chests for the pedal division (the home of most of the nonfunctioning pipes) and replacing all the contacts on the pedalboard (a major effort). Later on, as the releathering transitions to the great division (the middle keyboard), we’ll fix a leaking air reservoir, replace the tattered screen between the pipes and the chancel (suggestions regarding the new screen’s color are welcome), and rehabilitate some damaged reed pipes. Those are currently the highest-priority projects, and your continuing contributions are deeply appreciated!



Robert Phillips suggests Lent needs a bit of a laugh