

JULY 2024

# The Messenger

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

## Let Us Flourish Together

Dear Beloved, First Church Family and Friends:

Peace be with you all!

First of all, I am grateful to God that I have been reappointed to First United Methodist Church of Riverside for another year by Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank! It is truly God's grace that I am entering into the 9th year of my pastoral appointment to First UMC of Riverside here as of July 1. And I thank each and every one of you; you are one of the most amazing, loving, and faithful congregations!



During last month's California-Pacific Annual Conference, our Bishop encouraged all the 350 local churches of the conference, mostly in Southern California but including the Hawaii District, to "flourish" as a congregation!

Simply put, "flourishing" is about doing well and blooming. We are called to scatter the seed of God's love and trust that God gathers the harvest! Let me share with you an excerpt from the Bishop's greeting from the 2024 Cal-Pac Preliminary Report:

*If flourish was a season, it would be spring. If a period in life, it would be parenting. If flourishing was a drink, it would be green tea. If a relationship, it would be one that is trusting, honoring, and joyful. Flourish is like drinking a morning coffee outside on a warm day, listening to the birds sing. Flourish is the garden that is budding with vibrant color. It is the community that cares for the earth together, planting gardens and trees, and living sustainably. To flourish is to watch the stars at night, experiencing awe for all God's creation.*

My sisters and brothers in Christ! I believe that you, the congregation of First UMC of Riverside, have been already "flourishing" in many ways through our presence, worship, nurturing, missions, and ministries.

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## Pastor's Message (cont.)

And now we can do better and more joyfully than ever as you and I are embarking on a new faith journey together.

Starting this July, you are invited to engage in my new sermon series, "Live Your Happy Life Today!" Even though you are being constantly overwhelmed by many negative things, such as post-pandemic stress, harrowing war news, and many other depressing situations and circumstances, it is extremely important for us to focus on God who not only loves you unconditionally but also gives you sources of strength and joy.

It is timely appropriate to learn how to develop and manage your happiness in your own ever-challenging lives.

I am very excited and truly grateful to God for working with you as a "flourishing" Body of Christ!

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

## Celebrate the 4th!

Our tradition is to invite the neighborhood to our parking lot to watch the fireworks shooting up from Mt. Rubidoux. Come celebrate Independence Day! The gates to the parking lot open at 6 pm and the donation is \$5 per car with proceeds going to Faith and Fellowship. Bring your chairs and your snacks and let's watch together.



*We give thanks to God for Claire Jefferson Glipa and Family Promise of Riverside. She spoke in church on June 23 to tell us how families are getting shelter, food and love in partnership with several churches, including ours.*

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Feed My Sheep

At 4:30 pm Sunday, July 7 we need volunteers to cook a meal and deliver it to Family Promise of Riverside. They are staying in our upstairs Sunday School rooms. We will cook, deliver the meal and clean up by about 7:30 pm.

Church and Society would like to make this a monthly group activity, a fun cooking night, that responds to Jesus's request that we feed his sheep. If we get enough volunteers we will plan this activity more often.

They have another program on Tuesday nights called "Book Buddies." That requires just reading to children. Claire Jefferson-Glipa spoke Sunday in church and invited us all to be involved with donations or hands on help. Find out more at [www.fpRiverside.org/volunteer](http://www.fpRiverside.org/volunteer)

Thanks, Kris Lovekin, Church and Society







## Ways to Give

Please bring donations to the church office by July 10.

- Gently used children's books.
- Loose leaf **wide ruled** notebook paper
- Spiral bound notebooks, **wide ruled**
- Packs of lined index cards
- Post it notes
- A cash donation is also a wonderful way to provide the school supplies. We will do the shopping for you. Make the donation to First United Methodist Church and write school supplies on the item line.



# The Summer Bash is July 27

By Lyn Knowles

Our THIRD Bye Bye Summer Bash takes place Saturday, July 27 from 9 am to 12 pm. We have lots of fun events planned: crafts, games, bounce house, water slide, and this year for the first time we will rent a snow cone machine. We are also distributing backpacks with school supplies.

Our church needs volunteers to help set up the area prior to the event (8 am to 9 am), people to help during the event (distribute school supplies, lead crafts and games, distribute snacks, etc.), and people willing to put everything away after the event (when the event workers are tired and could use some fresh energy).

We will have volunteer sign up tables after church on June 30, July 7, July 14, and July 21.

Please help us advertise this event by handing out flyers to friends and neighbors and sharing Facebook and Instagram posts. We will distribute flyers to the congregation on July 14 and 21, but you can also pick up a flyer earlier at the volunteer sign up table.

We kept track of how people heard about us during our Breakfast with Bunny event. Of all the ways people heard about our event, the greatest number of people heard because they were invited by someone in the church. So don't be shy. Invite your friends and neighbors.

We will distribute gently used children's books during the event. Please don't go out and buy brand new books, but if you have children's books that are in good shape that you are willing to donate, please give them to a member of the Outreach Team or leave them in the office with a note saying they are for the Summer Bash giveaway.

**SCHOOL SUPPLIES:** We already have a good selection of school supplies ready to be assembled. (We don't need any more college ruled items.) We are buying backpacks in bulk at a great savings. We still need the items listed at left.







## Vacation Bible School Around the Campfire

Our Vacation Bible School in early June attracted more than 50 children, with adults and youth helping to lead them. Our theme, "Camp Firelight," gave us tents and campfires, bandanas and counselor hats. Plus, we had a very cute lightening bug called Lumen. We had Bible stories, music time, crafts, science, recreation and of course, snacks.

The Friday celebration included a bounce house, and a performance of our theme song for parents, who captured it on their cell phones. Thanks to Christina Graves, Lucinda Edmunds, Daryl and Lee Ann Salmon, Barbara Jo Wilson, Kelly Weakly, Becki Brawner, Bev DeFrance, Patti Gardenias, Cindy Qualtieri, DeAnn McWilliams, June Van Genuchten, Loretta Cudney, Cindy Marr, Katrina Zeeb, and so many other volunteers.





# Introducing Our Scholarship Winners



Nana Gwira

Did you know that five of our young adults received scholarships from our church? We congratulate them as they move forward in their endeavors.

Nana Gwira is attending UCLA. His goal is a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science.

Billy Gwira is attending Cal Baptist with a goal of a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology.

Kyle Grimes is attending UC San Diego with a goal of obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Archeology. His long term goal is to earn a Master's Degree as well as a Ph.D.

Dylan Grimes is attending Riverside City College. His objective is to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

Carolina Renteria is attending RCC with a goal of becoming a teacher.

Our church has several scholarship funds to help our youth and others with their college/trade school expenses. Three are named for people who left a gift to the church: the Russell-Riley Fund for those students attending RCC; the Fitch-Kriege Fund for those students attending a 4-year university; and the Marr Family Fund for those specifically attending UCR, CBU, or RCC. The Christian Education Committee also created a dedicated scholarship fund for students attending a trade school.

The United Methodist Men hold an auction every May to raise money for scholarships, and this year's auction raised \$2,000 to help fund our students. The money that is donated at our Lenten Soup Suppers also goes to support the Educational Scholarship Dedicated Fund.

Loretta Cudney and Regan Pope  
Christian Education Committee Co-Chairs



Billy Gwira



Kyle Grimes



Dylan Grimes



Carolina Renteria

**Did you know that you can contribute to any of the funds listed above to help keep these funds available for our future students? Contact the church office if you are interested. Thank you for your love and support of our college-bound youth.**



# Cal-Pac Annual Conference Felt Peaceful

The California-Pacific Annual Conference, held June 12 to 15 in Burbank, included ordinations and retirements, new initiatives and lots of singing and worship. Pastor J.T. Kim, Kris Lovekin and Greg Laird were delegates who voted on behalf of the church while Lisa Laird came along for the worship services, the meals and the fellowship. All told, 1,100 people attended this year.

The landmark vote in April at General Conference that lifted bans on LGBTQIA weddings and ordinations resolved a long standing dispute in the church, so this conference felt extra peaceful.

We now have more of an emphasis on regional decisions that allow the local church and the local pastor to decide how to minister to the community. We also acknowledged that the United States has a different cultural context than Korea or the Philippines or Africa. With a denomination as large as the United Methodist Church, there will be different rules in different countries, especially related to things like gay marriage.

Generally, the Cal-Pac conference voted to make new disciples for Christ through a lens of justice for all people of all backgrounds, including acknowledging past wrongs against indigenous peoples, supporting gun safety, caring for the protection of natural resources and ministering to people in a hands on way that includes food, housing and health care.

There were presentations on projects like Inglewood UMC's housing initiative that puts low income housing and community resources on the property. We heard presentations on ministry with refugees, with seniors and with the homeless. We talked about partnerships within United Methodist congregations, like the one we have with Wesley UMC in the HOPE Room.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank ordained or commissioned 16 clergy and celebrated the retirement of 26 clergy, including our former pastor, the Rev. Brian Kent after 41 years of ministry in the United Methodist Church.

Pastor Mateo Mamea is leading a ministry at Borrego Springs UMC that successfully sheltered 18 families (65 individuals) who are refugees in the U.S. The ministry is helped by other congregations, including FUMCOR.

To see some of the recordings and photos from the 2024 Cal-Pac Annual Conference, go here:

<https://www.calpacumc.org/ac2024/>

To read a more detailed overview: <https://www.calpacumc.org/annual-conference-2024/report-of-the-40th-california-pacific-annual-conference-session/>



Kris Lovekin, Pastor Kim,  
Greg Laird



East District Superintendent  
Rev. Moonyoung Lee at  
center



Bishop Dottie and retiring  
Pastor Brian Kent



Pastor Mateo Mamea and  
Pastor Kim



# Thank You for Summer Fun

Our youth and families had a great time swimming and eating, and there was lots of laughter on Saturday, June 8. We had a good turnout and are so grateful to Dave and Sarah Fraser for hosting us.



## Youth Uplift News

We will resume in late August or early September. Each Wednesday evening, we have a family pizza dinner together and chat. We have a devotional and end with a game and, of course, dessert.

Psalm 113:3

From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of the Lord is to be praised.

## Parents' Morning Out Summer Session

Parents' Morning Out will continue through the summer on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 9 am to noon (excluding July 2, 3 and 4).

We're extending this to our preschool families and other community parents who would like to leave their 18-month thru 5-year-old children while they get a much-deserved break.

The cost is \$25 per child, \$10 more for a sibling. Parents must register in advance at the QR code. Questions? Contact: Christina Graves [childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org](mailto:childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org) or the church office at 951-683-7831.





# Robert Nelson

## Funding our Mission

By David Fraser



Here's a quiz for you. Who in our church was born and raised on a farm in South Dakota and has been a lifelong Methodist? This person has four children who were brought up at FUMCOR. Who has served as Chair of the Board of Trustees, Chair of the Finance Committee, Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee, Chair of the Worship Committee, President of the United Methodist Men, and has been a key member of other committees and task groups over the years? Who in our church has a Riverside County waste management site named after them by the County Board of Supervisors? Who's a regular at the Friday morning UMM Prayer Breakfast meetings? Last question, who is our Church Historian? If you haven't guessed yet, it is Bob Nelson.

Bob has been a shining example of what it means to be a good steward in our church. At UMM lunches he leads songs at the beginning and puts on an apron to tackle the pots and pans at the end. He meticulously catalogues donated items for the fundraising auction.

As Church Historian, Bob works with volunteers to sort church records, photos and memorabilia. They are digitizing and preserving our history for posterity. His efforts have allowed us to highlight significant gifts in worship during "Legacy Talks."

It all started in Montrose, South Dakota, where his mother was the organist and choir director and his dad served in leadership roles and was active in United Methodist Men. So Methodism is in his blood.

Bob got a degree in Civil Engineering at the South Dakota School of Mines. He married Mary and then went off to serve for three years as a pilot in the Army during Vietnam. When he was discharged, he wanted to use his civil engineering degree so in 1965 he accepted a job with Riverside County Flood Control. Over the years, he rose in the ranks of administration in the county and became Director of Riverside County Waste Management, where his vision as director brought an important new resource to Riverside County, the Agua Mansa waste management site.

He credits his arrival at FUMCOR to Ella Kriege, a member of the church who brought hundreds of people into the congregation with personal visits and persuasion. "She was an amazing woman," Bob said.

Bob has sung tenor in the Aldersgate chorale for many years recently, but at first he sang in the pews next to his wife Mary and children David, Michael, Karen and Chris. Bob counts as one of his most gratifying successes, the raising of his children in our church.

After Mary's death, Bob met Norma at FUMCOR, and they eventually married. Norma was his constant companion at church events. But her Parkinson's disease progressed to the point where Bob was not able to care for her any longer by himself. He visits her almost daily at Westmont Village where she currently is in assisted living.

Bob says he is guided by his faith in Christ and his belief and commitment to Christ's message and the mission of the church. The Christ-centered church forms the core of his life which he believes ought to be at the center of every person's life.

Bob's mother once said to him, "Robert, do what you can do, not what you can't." That advice has guided Bob over the years, and he has found that when you let go and focus on what you can do, that surprisingly, the things you thought you could not do become easier to tackle.



# New Look Launched

After several months of work, our media and communication teams on July 1 launched a new design for our website, the public face of our church.

Find it at [www.firstchurchriverside.org](http://www.firstchurchriverside.org)

It has an easy way to find the online worship service, lists of church events and that important sermon you accidentally missed.

It has been designed to highlight questions people might have if they are brand new to the church. It has space to store six months worth of Messengers and bulletins so we can look back. It has an active church calendar that needs to be filled by event organizers.

The address hasn't changed.

Your suggestions are always welcome about how to improve our outreach to the community.

Big thanks to all the members of our team: Gayla, Dan, Carmen Lonsbery, Jeff Ashworth and Kris Lovekin.

The screenshot shows the website's header with a large 'Welcome' message in red script, followed by 'to the First United Methodist Church of Riverside' in a smaller font. Below this is the church's motto: 'Follow Jesus, Love People, Transform the World'. A banner below the header reads 'Can't make it? Join our livestream. Sunday mornings at 10:00am' with a 'Go Live' button. The main content area features six tiles: 'New Here?' (with a church exterior image), 'Events' (with a child's face), 'Get Connected' (with puzzle pieces), 'Give' (with people at a table), 'Newsletters & Videos' (with a pastor at a podium), and 'Community Service' (with hands on a map). Each tile has a red button at the bottom.



# Cakes and Socks a Good Combination



At left, the Father's Day Cake Walk gets underway. At right, Ron Bayer shows his sock tossing form. All the socks collected went to Project HOPE at Wesley UMC.





## A Farewell from Matt Gorder



Matt Gorder and Earl Bogan at a UMM lunch

*After more than 30 years at FUMCOR, most recently as our head usher and president of United Methodist Men, Matt Gorder has said that he will be affiliating more with the Catholic church starting in August. We will be honoring his long years of service at FUMCOR in the worship service of July 28. United Methodist Men lunches will resume in the Fall. Matt wrote a letter:*

Dear Church Family,

Making this change has been something that I have been thinking about, and praying about, for some time. Anita and I have been married for 40 years, and we have done "the two-church thing" since the beginning. When our kids were young, I brought them with me to FUMCOR on Sunday mornings for the nursery, and then for Sunday school, and Anita was able to go to Mass by herself, and it was just the break a young Mom needed. Later on the kids were old enough to join her at Mass, and that worked out OK. Now that they are grown and out of the house, she was attending Mass alone.

I figure that I might have 10 years left, maybe more if God is willing... but maybe less. That's only about 500 Sundays. I'm looking forward to spending that time together with Anita. We'll just be down the street at St. Thomas the Apostle, at the corner of Magnolia Ave. and Jackson St., across the street from the Sherman Indian High School and Parkview Nursery. It's the parish that Anita grew up in, and we were married there. So, it's home for both of us.

I'm very grateful that you and the rest of the congregation at FUMCOR have shared my faith journey for the last 30+ years. Believe me, I have received much more from the church and the congregation than I have given over the years. It's always been one of the highlights of my week to be able to greet everyone as they arrive for worship. I am really going to miss that. I'm going to miss a lot about our church, but I hope to stay connected. I just won't be there regularly on Sunday mornings anymore.

I'm working on recruiting my replacement(s). The donuts are probably my most important contribution! Hopefully we can get that to continue.

Your Brother in Christ,

Matt

The Messenger will take a rest in August and come back Sept. 1



# Prayers & Praises

## We Pray For...

Ruth Martinez, Lou Santino, Mary Mamea, Brandy Qualtieri, Allison George, Dale Grout, Cathy Dolan, DeAnn McWilliams, Jeff Bruns, Peggy Haught, Rebecca Slaughter, Nan Friedley, Mary Herrmann, Kat Franklin, John and Susan Logger, Michael Thompson, Mary Negrete, Jim Ashworth, Ron Tovar, Linda Rydzik, the Reupert family



### **Devoted Sisters**

We had a sweet moment in church on June 16. Lucinda Edmunds discovered that no children were coming up for children's time. She was ready to move on. But before she could, her own younger sister quickly hopped up from her seat and settled herself at Lucinda's feet with an adoring look up. After advanced degrees and successful careers and families, these two women are still big sister Lu and little sister Sarah. How blessed we are to have them in our church family!

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

### July Anniversaries

- 18 Steve and Ruth Walker
- 28 William and Margaret Waite

### July Birthdays

- 1 Gigi Johnson Handen
- 4 Dan Lonsbery
- 5 Delaney Britain
- 5 Valerie Othon
- 9 Adrienne Austin-Knight
- 9 Delphine Sims
- 9 Lee Bayer
- 9 Judy Bello
- 11 Christina Graves
- 15 Esther Kim
- 15 David Fraser
- 15 Michael Thompson
- 17 Mateo Mamea
- 17 Donna Woodard
- 18 Mele Tupou
- 18 Kaley Weakly
- 22 Jessie Erickson
- 24 Linda Rydzik
- 26 Margaret Waite
- 27 India Lovekin
- 27 Ruth Walker
- 28 Brian Tomlinson
- 31 Patricia Beals

We welcome  
all people,  
including  
the LGBTQIA community,  
into worship and into  
the full life  
of the church.

**Lord, you have come to the lakeshore  
looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones;  
you only asked me to follow humbly.**

**You need my hands full of caring  
through my labors to give others rest,  
and constant love that keeps on loving.**

**You, who have fished other oceans,  
ever longed for by souls who are waiting,  
my loving friend, as thus you call me.**

**O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me  
and while smiling have spoken my name;  
now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me;  
by your side I will seek other seas.**

**- Cesareo Gabaraín**





# The Organ Goes Under the Knife (or at least the wirecutters)

By Robert Phillips



*Fred and Janet Westall, Robert's longtime friends, get a tour of the organ console after last month's handbell concert.*

On July 1, repair work on our organ will begin in earnest. Sean, our organ technician, will remove the pedalboard, take it to his shop in Seal Beach, and replace all the contacts. These contacts are delicate contraptions, are 67 years old, and have been failing one by one (usually right before one of my concerts). This project will be more difficult than it sounds. Years ago, when a different technician refurbished the console, he failed to leave any slack in the wiring for the pedals, so they cannot be pulled out and worked on without cutting the wires. Therefore, when Sean returns to Riverside with the spiffed-up pedalboard, he will have to replace all of the wiring, providing sufficient slack to make any future repairs much easier.

Since the organ won't have any pedals for a week or two, the Worship Committee decided to move the now-traditional performance of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" up to June 30, as a post-postlude. This piece definitely requires a pedalboard! Sean assures me that, while the pedals are in his shop, the organ will still be playable. There are countless compositions that don't use the pedals, and our instrument features a coupling system that allows the deep pedal stops to be played on the middle keyboard, providing a convincing, full sound for accompanying hymns.

Although this feature is intended for organists whose tootsies aren't particularly proficient, it will come in handy while the pedals are vacationing in Seal Beach.

The pedal project is the first of several planned repairs. All of this work is made possible by your continuing donations to the Organ Dedicated Fund. The generous response to our concerts is always gratifying, and we truly appreciate your ongoing contributions throughout the year.



## United Women in Faith Head to Islands

On July 11, all women are invited to Islands at the Riverside Plaza for conversation with the United Women in Faith. This is the monthly lunch bunch and it starts at 11 am. For more details contact: Pam Conlin 951-237-5470.





# Empty Nesters Set July 20

Join Empty Nesters for a potluck dinner at 5 pm Saturday, July 20 in our Fellowship Hall. Bring a dish to share and get ready for fun, food and fellowship. Above, Teri and Dennis Whieldon ask players to guess the murderer in a mystery movie.



## Ongoing Events

- Sunday Worship: 10 am
- Sunday School for Children: 10:15 am
- First Sundays: 9:15 am Chapel Prayer
- First Sundays: Holy Communion
- Third Sundays - Response Band leads Worship
- Friday Prayer Breakfast, 7 am UMM



JOIN THE HABIT BURGER GRILL IN SUPPORT OF

**First United Methodist  
Church of Riverside**

**Sunday, July 28th 2024, 11:00 AM – 9:30 PM**

The Habit Burger Grill will **DONATE 20% OF NET SALES** from this event to benefit your organization. Simply present printed flyer or show offer on your smart phone to cashier upon ordering.



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## Need to Reach Us?

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*First United*  
Methodist Church of Riverside