

DECEMBER 2024

The Messenger

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

Thank You!

By Mary L. Herrmann,
Stewardship Chair

*"Lord, help me be grateful for what I have,
remember that I don't need most of what I want,
and that joy is found in simplicity and generosity." -
- Adam Hamilton, from "Enough: Discovering Joy
Through Simplicity and Generosity."*



In this month of giving thanks, I want to share my appreciation to all who faithfully committed to support FUMCOR in 2025 by turning in their pledge. To date, our Stewardship Campaign has resulted in 45 pledges for \$215,760, and much volunteer interest (which is compiled, recorded and shared with Pastor Kim). Thank you!

It is not too late to pledge and I hope you will do so. Even if you have been giving for years, tell us the amount for this coming year. It helps us plan our budget with more confidence. It could be as simple as a note to the church financial secretary saying that you just want to keep with the status quo of your giving.

Our all church conference went well on Nov. 23, led by our own District Superintendent Moonyoung Lee. She complimented First UMC for being strong enough to let our pastor have time off early in the year, and giving him rest. She said it was inspiring to other congregations in the East District. Our sister congregation Wesley UMC shared our Fellowship Hall and we welcomed them with cookies.

The Apostle Paul encourages us to give thanks in all circumstances. I give thanks for all our church members, my church family; for your faithfulness, kindness and generosity. I wish you a joyous and safe holiday season.

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First United

Methodist Church of Riverside

Advent Study Begins Dec. 4

You are invited to the Advent Study that begins at 7 pm Wednesday, Dec. 4 via zoom and continues on Wednesdays through Dec. 18. Go to all the sessions on the same zoom link.

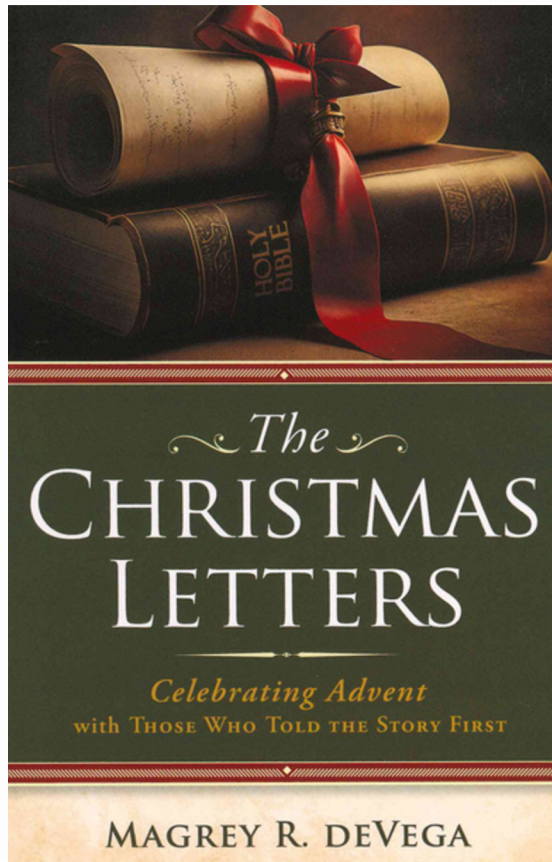
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86332320447?pwd=pBa3mMbUTBIZU8qb0CxKMAvaaZx7IE.1>

Pastor J. T. Kim will lead the sessions and this study is open to all. The new book is "The Christmas Letters: Celebrating Advent with Those Who Told the Story First," by Magrey R. DeVega, are now available at the church office.

Please contact the church office, 951-683-7831, to register for this Advent Study and to reserve your copy of the book (suggested donation: \$15).

I highly recommend you participate in these meaningful Advent observances with our church family & friends.

Blessings,
Pastor J. T. Kim



Volunteer Opportunities

Offer Gifts of Love

Wesley UMC and First UMC will team up to buy Christmas gifts for families. You can donate cash or gift cards and let others do the shopping. Gift cards are often perfect gifts for teens.

Volunteers are still needed to deliver food and set up for the gift giving to families at Wesley. Contact Lee Ann Salmon (951) 906-6452 if you want to help with the project.



Make it a Habit

Every month we make it easy to have some dinner at The Habit to raise money for missions at our church. Join us on Dec. 22 from 11 am to 9 pm. Twenty percent of what you buy is sent back to the church. Just take a flyer with your from the narthex.

Are You Blue? Are You Grieving?

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!" Or is it? For many people, the approaching Christmas holiday does not bring the joy and happiness that many experience. We may be facing this holiday after the death of a loved one, friend or neighbor.

We may have suffered through emotional trauma, loneliness, physical pain, or some other dis-ease. What do people who are "blue" at Christmas need? Some, living through dark times, may need to get distance from the holly jolly festivities in order to reflect, and to seek hope and healing.

Come experience our "Blue Christmas" Worship Service at 12 noon or 7 pm on Tuesday, Dec. 3, led by Rev. Beverly Devine. We will provide a peaceful experience for people who feel such burdens. Together, we may acknowledge the deep darkness and we may look for the light. The Christmas hymns, scriptures, silence, and a message of hope may remind us of what Christmas is all about. We will focus on the nativity and our own new reality just ahead of the busiest time, brimming with expectations; theirs and ours. May Jesus be our peace.



Alternative Gift Fair Will Be Here Sunday, Dec. 1



This year's Alternative Gift Fair, which focuses on handmade goods and good causes, is set for 11 am to 3 pm Sunday, Dec. 1.

Music, soup and good fellowship is the draw, along with crafts from 10,000 Villages, handcrafts made by the United Methodist Women; as well as cards and gifts from Heifer International and many other booths. The local literary hub Inlandia Institute sells books about the Inland area. The Riverside Food Co-op will have a booth, with jams and candles. Pencils and Dreams will be back this year. Find out more on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/alternativegiftfair>



The kitchen crew includes Sue, Jenn and Val. They stir up batches of delicious soup.





Santa's Workshop is Dec. 7

Invite your kids, your grandkids, and your neighbors, because Santa Claus is coming to First UMC from 1 to 3 pm on Saturday, Dec. 7. We'll be decorating cookies, playing Christmas games, making crafts, listening to carols and visiting with Santa and Mrs. Claus!

One lucky family will win a fabulous gift basket. This is a free event offered as an outreach to our community, so please help spread the word.

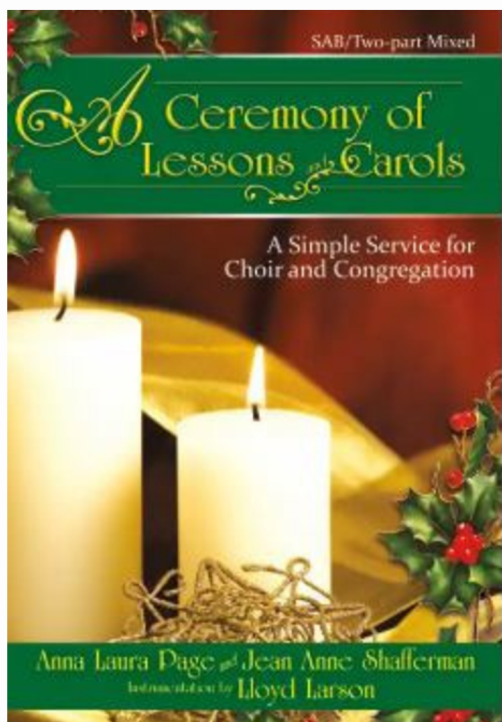


Christmas Cantata on Sunday, Dec. 15

Music director Yvonne Flagg will direct and organist Robert Phillips will accompany.

On Dec. 15 the Aldersgate Chorale will sing "A Ceremony of Lessons and Carols" for our worship service. It was arranged by Anna Laura Page and Jean Anne Shafferman. The beloved seasonal scripture readings are tightly interwoven with 26 carols that include just a touch of Handel and Bach! A continuous flow of carols both accompanies the scripture readings and flows seamlessly into simple arrangements for choir, vocal solo or duet, and choir with congregation. The congregation will be invited to sing along with many of the carols.

The traditional Service of Lessons and Carols is synonymous with Christmas celebrations. Telling the story of humanity's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden through the promise of redemption in the messianic prophecies and the birth of Jesus, these beloved services intersperse Bible readings with the singing of Christmas carols and hymns. The basic structure of this service was framed by Edward White Benson, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, for Christmas Eve 1880 in Truro, Cornwall, England. Generations of Christians have loved this service.



Special Christmas Treat
Sunday, Dec. 8th 10 am

Join us for:

"Rejoice! A Christmas Performance of Songs and Scriptures."

It's sure to bring joy to your heart!



Wishing you a joyful time with family and friends during this holiday season!

Christmas Party

**December 15
at 5:30 pm**



Youth Group
will take a break
and resumes... January 5

Our United Methodist Youth U.P.L.I.F.T Fellowship is for youth in 5th through 12th grades, and family members are welcome to stay!

Youth, bring your friends!

We are meeting once this month for our Christmas party.

RSVP to Christina so we make sure we have plenty of pizza.
Christina Graves at 951-212-5725.

Parents Morning Out

SCHEDULE CHANGE! NOW, ON TUESDAYS!

Parents may drop off their children ages 18 months to preK (4-5) for childcare from 9 am to 12 pm in the Nursery room. (when FUMPS is in session)

Cost is \$25 per child/\$35 for two siblings, cash or check. Reserve a spot by signing up at <https://firstumcriverside.breezechms.com/form/2cc6b2> or by contacting Christina Graves at 951-212-5725, childrensdirectorefirstchurchriverside.org or the church office at 951-683-7831.



Gifts and Graces

Funding our Mission

A Kinder, Gentler Organ (Temporarily)

By Robert Phillips



The very gentle and kind Robert Phillips at the console

As you read this, our pipe organ is undergoing another round of refurbishment. The second group of pouch rails (explained in last month's Messenger) for the Great division (the middle keyboard) are in the technician's shop in Seal Beach, receiving brand-new leather pouches. During this repair, several of the louder stops, used primarily for accompanying congregational singing and for bombastic postludes, will be out of commission. Luckily, our organ is large enough that I can pull stops from the remaining divisions to support hymn-singing in fine style. The resulting sound, however, will have a somewhat rounder, flutier quality than you're accustomed to. The organ should be back to full power in plenty of time for our Christmas celebrations. These repairs are made possible by your continuing support of our Organ Dedicated Fund. The generosity of those attending our Halloween concert, a matching contribution from an anonymous donor, and a substantial gift from the United Women in Faith have elevated the total proceeds from that event to over \$5,800! I truly appreciate your wholehearted support of our music ministry.



Just in Time Stocking Stuffers

The finance committee will be selling small boxes of See's chocolate for \$11 each following church on Dec. 1 and until supplies last in December.

About half of those proceeds will come back to the church budget shortfall. So help the budget and finish your shopping...all at one time.

For purchases of four or more boxes, David Fraser is willing to deliver. But get those orders in. David is selling at the Alternative Gift Fair as there might be a rush on chocolate.



The angels and shepherds gather at the manger. Photo by Kirsten Snyder

Be Wise at Living Nativity

Have you ever wanted to be a wise person? Or a shepherd? Come worship at the manger on Sunday, Dec. 22 in our traditional Living Nativity on the front lawn. The church has the costumes, and there are hot drinks and delicious cookies afterward. We start at 5:30 pm with costuming and the presentation is at 6:30 pm. This is a beautiful event. Invite a friend or a neighbor. Thanks to Sue and Brian Tomlinson for their faithful organization of this event.

Reserve your Poinsettias

in remembrance or honor of your loved ones....



Given by _____

In Memory of _____

Honor of _____

Cost is \$20.

Deadline is Dec. 6 at the Church Office

Email: secretary@firstchurchriverside.org



United
Women
in Faith

Christmas Brunch and Cookie Exchange

Dear Ladies,
Remember how fun it was when the OFF Group held the Christmas cookie exchange? United Women in Faith has missed the tradition. Please join us for our Christmas brunch and cookie exchange at 10 am Wednesday, Dec. 18 in the Koinonia Room. The UWF Executive Committee will provide the food for brunch. Bring three dozen cookies if you want to participate in the cookie exchange. Boxes will be provided for you to take your new cookie selection home. All ladies are invited to attend, but please let a board member know so we are sure to have enough for everyone.
Board members: Lyn Knowles, Patti Gardenias, Pam Conlin, Cindy Qualtieri, Lisa Laird, Becki Brawner, Shirley Parks, and Donna Woodard.
We will have a brief officer installation, dine, and then, exchange cookies.



Key News & Notes

Dec. 1 – 11 am – 3 pm Alternative Gift Fair

Dec. 12 – 11 am Lunch Bunch at Bushfire Kitchen in Canyon Crest Town Center

Dec. 18 – 10 am UWF Christmas Brunch and Cookie Exchange – Koinonia Room

No Executive Meeting / No Bible Study



At our November Meeting we approved the Executive Committee Officers for 2025, Budget, and 2024 End of Year Giving. Carolyn Greywood told us about her weightlifting and Old Olympics participation.

New Book Study in January

Jesus in Me - Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion by Anne Graham Lotz

Eight Sessions, Thursdays Jan. 9 through Feb. 27 at 7 pm on Zoom

Have you ever finished reading a passage in the Bible and discovered you didn't remember much about what you read? That won't happen in this study. Instead, you'll slow down and really examine what the verses have to say, using a method that Anne teaches in the first lesson. Buy the book "Study Guide with Streaming Video." You may never use the Streaming Video, but this study guide gives you the exercises that teach the study method. Also, if you want to review the directions in session one, or if you are absent for one of the sessions, you can stream the episode on your own. Jesus in Me Bible Study Guide plus Streaming Video: Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion: Lotz, Anne Graham: 9780310146759: Amazon.com: Books. Buy your study guide but wait to read it until after Session One. Anne will provide a format for studying the Bible that will help you learn to listen for God's voice. Contact Karen Eagans (951-313-1017) or Lyn Knowles (951) 737-3541 to receive a zoom invitation to this study if you haven't attended a recent study.

United Methodist Men

Sunday, Dec. 8

Methodist Men Offer Lunch

After the church service Dec. 8, the United Methodist Men will hold their monthly luncheon meeting with the theme of a holiday singalong with Jeff Ashworth. It all starts in the Fellowship Hall starting at 11:30 am. The cost of the lunch is \$ 6 per person or \$ 15 per family.

We hope that you can join us for this time of fellowship. The UMM Prayer Breakfast meetings continue at 7 am on Friday mornings in Mary's Kitchen at the church.



Jeff Ashworth will lead the singing.

You are invited to celebrate and get to know our newest members!



Steve Kerrick, Holly Hough, David Leonard, David Vela, Sostenes "JR" Vela, Angela Lim



David Weise, Julita Nicanor, Char Kimball, Billy Gwira, Nan Friedley, Carol Cipra, Mandy Johnson-Bottrell

Prayers & Praises

Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

December Anniversaries

- 1 Christian Tupou/Elizabeth Tuihalamka
- 20 Doug and Rebecca Slaughter
- 20 Rollin and Lucinda Edmunds
- 22 LJ and Joy Arguelles
- 22 Roger and Gail Murray
- 29 Kirk and Kelly Weakly

December Birthdays

- 5 Brandon Labrador
- 6 Barry Arnold
- 6 Mandy Johnson-Bottrell
- 8 Mary Ellen Burch
- 8 Bertha Harris
- 9 Camille Arguelles
- 10 Angela Johnson
- 10 Sara Peck
- 11 Crisanjali Rajaratnam
- 12 Julia Zeeb
- 13 Helen Nuchols
- 14 Charles McFall-Thompson
- 15 Fiedad Arguelles
- 15 Kristin Beals
- 15 Kirk Weakly
- 17 Rachel Roland
- 23 Connie Taylor
- 29 William George
- 30 Carolyn Greywood
- 31 Jackie Cook

Prayer Concerns

Pat Beals, Greg Laird, Barbara Spencer, Norma Nelson, Mary Herrmann, Michael Thompson, Jim Ashworth, Linda Rydzik, Mary Boon, Melva Cooke, Mack Davis, John and Susan Page-Logger, Yvonne Peters, Chandra Roberts, Marge Wolter, Robert and Benita Roberts, Margaret Berger, LJ Arguelles, Michelle Arguelles, Bill and Helen Nuchols, Jesse Ruiz Jr., the families of: Mimi Luker Grimes, William Waite, William Hunter, Beulah Leake, our families, our neighbors, our country, and our world.

We seek the mighty God
in the most unlikely places
as a child in a stable,
and in an empty tomb.

May God hear these prayers,
which come from the unlikely
corners of our lives.

Give us ears to hear, O God,
and eyes to watch,
that we may know
your presence in our midst
during this holy season of joy
as we anticipate
the coming of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Farewell Mimi

We mourn the death of Mimi Luker at the age of 84, just six weeks after her wedding. Our prayers are with her family as they grieve, including Bob and Patricia Ream and their children Jules and Arline.

May Mimi's life of faith, hope, empathy, and compassion, encourage us to fully embrace living with grace and joy. Services have not yet been set.





Gingerbread House

(Gingerbread Mansion, Gingerbread Train, Gingerbread Dog House, etc) Decorating a Gingerbread House is much more fun if you do it with others. Come decorate your gingerbread house after church on Sunday, Dec. 15 in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a store bought kit for whatever Gingerbread creation you like. It will come with a minimal amount of candy and icing. We will provide more icing and more candy to help you fulfill your decorating design. We will also serve hot apple cider.

No reservation necessary. Just bring your kit and come join us in the fellowship hall.

Your gingerbread buddies: The Outreach Team



Two Services on Dec. 24

Join us for a sacred time of worship as the family of God with traditional carols, Holy Communion and singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. The children are featured at the first service at 7 pm. The bells play at the 11 pm second service, along with a vocal ensemble.

Refill the Backpack

It is mid-year for the school calendar, and some students will be running out of school supplies. The Outreach Committee is going to host a "refill your backpack" event. There will be no bounce house, no face painting, no gift basket, just the opportunity for those students who need to refresh their supplies to do so at the church. The Koinonia room will be open on Saturday, January 11 from 10 am until 12 noon for students who need new binders, dividers, notebooks, paper, pencils or erasers to gather new supplies for the new year. If you know someone who may need some help getting the extra needed school supplies as they start their new semester, invite them to visit us on January 11.

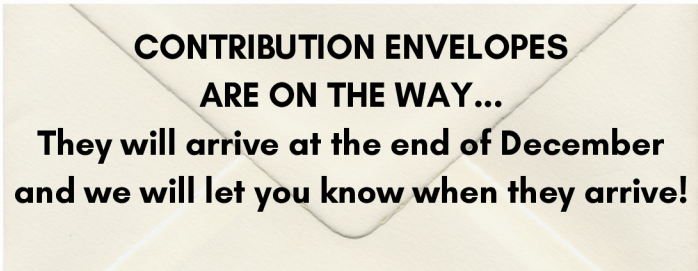


Highlighted Events

- Dec. 1: Alternative Gift Fair 11 am to 3 pm
- Dec. 3: Blue Christmas Services 12 pm and 7 pm
- Dec. 7: Santa's Workshop 1 to 3 pm
- Dec. 8: UMM Lunch 11:30 am
- Dec. 22: Living Nativity
- Dec. 24: Office closes at noon
- Dec. 24: Christmas Eve services 7 pm and 11 pm
- Dec. Office closed 25th and 26th
- Dec. 31: Office closes at noon
- Jan. 1: Office is closed.

Ongoing Events

- Sunday Worship: 10 am
- First Sundays-Holy Communion
- First Sundays-Chapel Prayer Circle
- Sunday School for Children: 10:15 am
- Youth Worship (2nd & 4th Sundays): 10:15 am
- Men's Lunch Second Sunday after church.
- Adult choir rehearsal: Thursdays, 7 pm
- Bell choir rehearsal: Tuesdays, 7 pm



Wash and Save

Church and Society is trying to strike a blow for the environment by offering a chance to purchase detergent without the plastic bottle. Each purchase from Tru Earth at the link below earns our church 20 percent back to support missions.

They make laundry detergent and other cleaning supplies.

<https://firstchurchriverside.org/giving/>



Need to Reach Us?

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4845 Brockton Avenue, Riverside, CA 92506
(951) 683-7831 (Mon to Fri 10am to 2pm)
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Gayla Lonsbery, Bell Director
belldirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Robert Phillips, Organist
organist@firstchurchriverside.org

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