

# The Messenger

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

## Happy New Year 2025!

By Pastor J.T. Kim

Dear Family & Friends of First United Methodist Church of Riverside:  
Happy New Year to you, your family, and your loved ones!

May God's love light your faith journey in the coming year again! I am praying for an amazing new year of spiritual growth and blessings for you and your family.

Even though none of us knows what tomorrow holds in every aspect of our life, let us keep our eyes focused on our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who came to love us, guide us, and strengthen us always.

Thank you all so much for your continuing love, support, and encouragement.

May God's peace, hope, joy, and love abundantly be upon you all throughout this new year, 2025, and beyond!

New Year Blessings,  
The Rev. J. T. Kim, Pastor



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# Cal-Pac Gathering Jan. 11

Sophie Weiss will represent our church at a Cal Pac gathering that explores what is working for young people in our United Methodist Conference. The event will be hosted Saturday, Jan. 11 at our church! We are excited to see the new things that God is doing to build the church.



CAL-PAC YOUNG GEN TASK FORCE

## Young Gen. Ministry Gathering

Listen & learn about the good works that God has been up to with our younger generations in Cal-Pac.



First United Methodist Church of Riverside



January 11  
10 AM - 2 PM

RSVP by Dec. 16



## News Briefs

### Eat at The Habit on Jan. 26

First UMC has designated Jan. 26 as a fundraising night at The Habit, a hamburger restaurant at the Riverside Plaza.

The hours are 11 am to 9 pm and 20 percent of your bill will come back to the missions fund of the church. Show your fundraiser flyer to the cashier. We will send this out via email and we will have it in the narthex too.



JOIN HABIT BURGER & GRILL IN SUPPORT OF  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF RIVERSIDE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26 | 11:00AM - 9:00PM

Enter code **GIVEBACK** when placing your order at the in-restaurant kiosk, the Habit Burger & Grill Mobile app, or habitburger.com. Or, simply present this printed flyer or show this offer on your smart phone to the cashier upon ordering. Habit Burger & Grill will donate **20% OF NET SALES** from this event to benefit your organization.

## Empty Nester's Potluck



Our church is investing in fun potlucks each third Saturday of the month. We play games, watch movies and enjoy sharing good food together. The January edition will begin at 5 pm Saturday, Jan. 18 in the Fellowship Hall. Start the new year with some fellowship.

## BELONGING & INCLUSION



All belong and will be loved in The UMC. All will be heard, respected and engaged. All will be free to develop their personal relationship with God and to serve fully in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

We are diverse, justice-seeking, resilient, welcoming people of God.

# Gifts and Graces

By David Fraser



## Sweet Treats for the Church Budget

Epiphany, which begins on Jan. 5, is the time when the church recalls the gifts of the Kings to the baby Jesus. What better time to emulate the royal gifts with some thoughtful giving toward the church.

Many of you have already supported our See's Candy fundraiser. About half of the cost goes back to fund church priorities. This year will again be a challenging year financially for our church. Utility costs and insurance costs continue to rise, yet we know we must continue to be a church that wins people for Christ.

You can play your part by pledging and by giving generously. If you've already pledged but can increase your pledge, or if you want to start pledging now, please let our Office and Finance Manager Becky Ruiz know. She is available by phone at (951) 683-7831 or by email at [r Ruiz@firstchurchriverside.org](mailto:r Ruiz@firstchurchriverside.org). Lastly, we are always looking for people to help with the fundraising ideas and to help implement them. The first of the year is the time when committee leaders typically change their roles. I want to welcome Rollin Edmunds to the chairmanship of the Finance Committee, and thank the committee members for their hard work this year.



Yum! See's Candy!



## Making a Joyful Noise

This year the finance committee decided to designate See's Candy funds to help fill the gaps in the preschool's finances. At left, one of the cherished FUMPS traditions, a program for the parents in our sanctuary.

Photo by Pastor J.T. Kim

# Your Involvement Makes a Difference!

We're looking for Sunday School teachers!

If you're interested in helping shape the faith of our youth, please contact Christina for more details.

She will provide you with the tools needed to inspire and engage each grade level.



## Let's Get Together!

We hope you had a wonderful Christmas!

**U.P.L.I.F.T. Youth Group will resume on  
Sunday, Jan. 5 at 5 pm.**

Join us for pizza, fellowship, and a great time together. All youth are welcome—bring a friend!

RSVP to Christina Graves so we make sure we have plenty of snacks!

[childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org](mailto:childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org)  
or the church office at 951-683-7831.



# Parents' Morning Out Starts Jan. 7

We meet every Tuesday from 9 am to 12 pm, welcoming children ages 18 months to 6 years old.

Cost is \$25 per day. We can't wait to see you!

Contact Christina Graves at  
[childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org](mailto:childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org)  
or the church office at 951-683-7831.



# December Highlights

Alternative Gift Fair



## Gather the People!

We are proud to host the Alternative Gift Fair on the first Sunday of each December. This year trustees had to work hard to get enough hot water and propane to cook the traditional soup in our Fellowship Hall. Many groups raised money for good causes, including United Women in Faith, 10,000 Villages, Heifer International, the Human Migration Institute, the Paper Flower Initiative, Love Riverside, the Riverside Food Co-Op and more. Sue Tomlinson and her crew made the soup.



Human Migration Institute works with refugees



Sophie Weiss and Kate Lovekin cashiered at 10,000 Villages so Kim Earhart can pick out her favorite things



Jules Ream played the piano with his friend A.J. on the saxophone.



Patricia and Arline Ream are at the paper flower booth



Bob Palmer played the dulcimer

# December Highlights

Santa's Workshop and Gingerbread house building



## Celebrate the Season!

Santa's Workshop drew families in to the Fellowship Hall for crafts and games on Dec. 7. Later, on Sunday, Dec. 15, the outreach committee organized a gingerbread house building activity.



Lyn Knowles and Becki Brawner show the elves how it's done



A proud construction worker



Terri Whieldon builds a gingerbread tee pee



chickens deserve gingerbread houses too

# December Highlights

Live Nativity and Christmas Eve



## Follow the Star!

We followed the star of Christmas love and found gift givers, angels, bells, shepherds, hot cocoa, cookies and fellowship at Live Nativity on Dec. 22. Two days later we held candles for our two Christmas Eve services. Thanks to all the organizers and all the volunteers!



The Zeebs at Live Nativity



Leslie Tomlinson, Kate Lovekin and Sophie Weiss are expert angels



The angels declared "Glory to the Lord!" Bryan Anderson, Sarah Anderson and 4-month-old baby Lando were this year's holy family. Leslie Tomlinson is the angel who appeared to Mary.



Pastor Kim and Rev. Bev put on their holiday robes, while it is a Kirkwood family tradition to wear pajamas to the late Christmas Eve service.



# United Methodist Men

Jan. 12



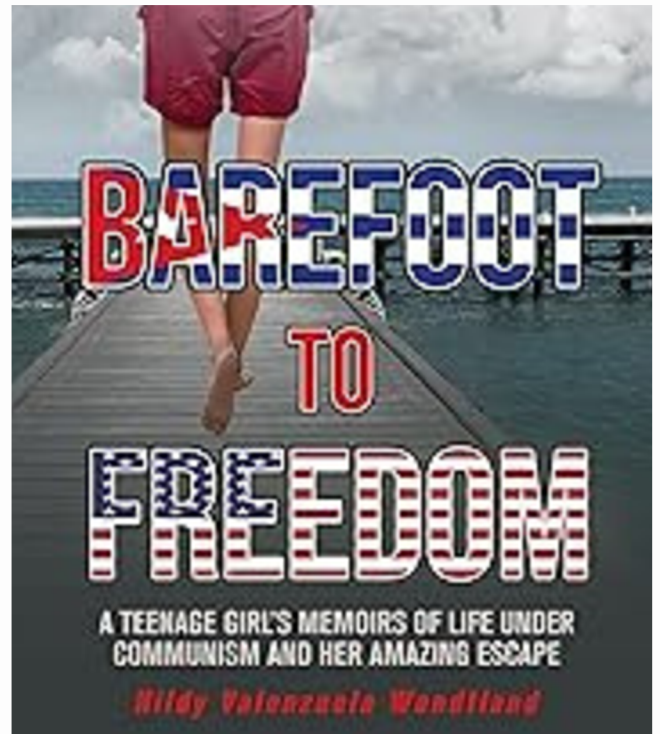
## January's UMM Lunch To Feature Asylum Seeker

Hildy Valenzuela Wendtland will be our speaker at the luncheon hosted by United Methodist Men after church Jan. 12. Her true story is covered in her book *Barefoot to Freedom*, that chronicles Hildy's life experiences in Cuba as a child during the Cold War, and the cruelties of communism toward nongovernment sympathizers. This is a story of survival and a warning of what happens when democracy is not defended, said David Leonard, president of UMM.

From the book publicity: "On April 1st, 1980, a bus with hopeful asylum-seekers crashed into the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Cuba. Within 48 hours, over 10,800 people occupied every inch of the 28,000-square-foot embassy. Among them was a fourteen-year-old girl named Hildy Valenzuela clinging to her younger brother. Relying on the wisdom of her father, Hildy also clung to hope. Hope that would see them through appalling conditions, near starvation, and the unpredictable desperation of those around them."

David Fraser, our chief cook, will provide a great lunch in the Fellowship Hall starting at 11:30 am at a cost of \$6 per person or \$15 for a family.

The UMM Prayer Breakfast meetings continue at 7 am on Friday morning's in Mary's Kitchen at the church. Typically the fare includes pastries or donuts plus coffee. All men are welcome.



Thanks to Jeff Ashworth and The Response for leading our Christmas singing at the Dec. 8 lunch.







## *Come join us for exciting activities and programs!*

### **2025 IS THE YEAR OF GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET AND GET INVOLVED WITH THE WOMEN OF THIS CONGREGATION**

- We will tour the Kimberly Crest Mansion, have tea at the Heritage House and more.
- The Lunch Bunch will be meeting the second Thursday of the month.
- The Gathering meets the last Saturday of the month and is an opportunity to visit with friends or make new friends.

We sure hope you will come join us!

### *UWF Bible Study*

**"Jesus in Me -**

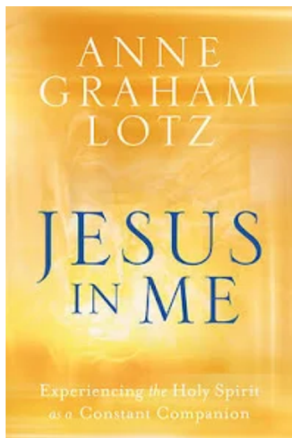
***Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion"***

**by Anne Graham Lotz**

**Eight Sessions, Thursdays,**

**January 9 through February 27, 2025**

**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.



Officers for the new year of 2025 United Women in Faith include from back row left: Becki Brawner; Patti Gardenias; Lisa Laird, Donna Woodard, Cindy Qualtieri, Kathy Callaway and Pam Conlin. Front row: Shirley Parks, Lyn Knowles and Margaret Berger.

### *Fun and Fellowship*

Jan. 8- Executive Meeting 1 pm via Zoom

Jan. 9- Lunch Bunch at Mama Mia's, 10971 Magnolia Ave. - 11 am

Jan. 22- UWF Meeting, Pledge and Remembrance - Chandler Lounge 10 am

Jan. 25- The Gathering in the Chandler Lounge 10 am

Feb. 9- UWF Bake Sale - after church

For more information contact:  
Lyn Knowles 951-737-3541

# Prayers & Praises

## Joys and Concerns

Please be in prayer for the prayer requests of the congregation.

Melissa Williams, Robin Renteria, Desmond Renteria, Bill and Helen Nuchols, David Fraser, Pat Williams, Pat Beals, Greg Laird, Barbara Spencer, Norma Nelson, Mary Herrmann, Michael Thompson, Jim Ashworth, Linda Rydzik, Mary Boon, Mack Davis, Melva Cooke, Yvonne Peters, Marge Wolter, Michelle Arguelles, John and Susan Page-Logger, Robert and Benita Roberts, Chandra Roberts, Jesse Ruiz Jr., De'Ann McWilliams, and the families of: William Waite, William Hunter, Beulah Leake, Mimi (Taylor) Grimes, Margaret Berger



### New Year's Prayer

"I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt,  
rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen."

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

### January Anniversaries

- 15 Bob Schiffer and Lisa Thomas
- 25 Ron and Lee Bayer
- 27 Don and Carolyn Greywood

### January Birthdays

- 1 Nick Lovekin
- 3 Benita Roberts
- 3 Julie Williams
- 4 Cheryl Riggs
- 4 Norikim Chavez
- 5 Teiapa'a Tupou
- 7 John Paul McDonald
- 8 Dylan Grimes
- 10 Joy Arguelles
- 11 Bradley Tomlinson
- 11 Deirdre Kirkwood
- 12 Jaswant Roberts
- 16 Teresa Clark
- 17 Patricia Ream
- 19 Lolita Manacop
- 20 Mack Davis
- 21 Kate Lovekin
- 25 Dustin Beals
- 28 Susan Exon
- 28 Rebecca Slaughter
- 29 Keith Miller
- 30 Evie Fletcher
- 31 Kyle Weakly



Lee Ann and Daryl Salmon and Mike Alfred on Christmas Eve

*Let peace  
begin with  
me!*



# The Blessing of Barbara Jo

By Mary Herrmann

Have you had a chance to see the beautiful Nativities displayed in the hallway outside the Chandler Lounge? Barbara Jo Wilson displayed them again this year. These Nativities have been donated by church members, including myself, over many past years, and it's been a long-time tradition of FUMCOR to display them during the Christmas season.

During 2025, the Finance Committee will celebrate church members who exemplify Faith-In-Action. We need volunteers who willingly stay active for the church. Barbara Jo Wilson is one such member.

Raised a Methodist in Huntertown, a small town in northern Indiana, she joined FUMCOR in 2005. Pastors Brian Kent and Shelia Kane were influential in her joining, and Pastor Shelia was her mentor.

Barbara Jo was Director of Children/Women Ministries here at FUMCOR. She developed and expanded interactive ways of learning for children through VBS and Sunday School. She led Women's retreats, Women's Bible Studies and Women's Movie Nights at FUMCOR, which included beneficial discussions and fellowship. She was an active member/volunteer of United Women in Faith and Faith in Fellowship. She spearheaded many other activities, including Operation Christmas Shoeboxes, Thank You Cards for Veterans, Family Movie Nights, etc.

Since her husband Jim passed away in 2019, Barbara Jo actively volunteers for the USO at March Air Reserve Base, Ontario Airport, and Fort Irwin, where she provides hospitality, care, and kindness to military service members and their families, including welcoming guests, serving snacks and beverages, a cause near-and-dear to her heart.

Volunteering is very satisfying, and can help a person find their purposes, connect with the community, gain confidence and develop their relationship with God. Volunteering can improve mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Thank you for your ongoing generous donations to FUMCOR. May the Peace and Joy of the Holy Family be with you and those you hold dear throughout 2025.



# Highlighted Events

- Jan. 5: U.P.L.I.F.T. Youth Group - 5 pm
- Jan. 7: Parents Morning Out (Nursery) - 9 am
- Jan. 11: Cal-Pac Conference Young Generation Ministry Gathering
- Jan. 12: UMM Lunch - 11:30 am
- Jan. 19: Baptism and New Member Sunday
- Jan. 26: UWF Mission Ministry Recognition

# Ongoing Events

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



A highlight of Advent is the Aldersgate Chorale's Christmas Cantata. This year on Sunday, Dec. 15, the choir sang "A Ceremony of Lessons and Carols."

# Need to Reach Us?

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

# Church Staff

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*First United*

Methodist Church of Riverside