

November 2025

The Messenger

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

Help in God's Name

By Kris Lovekin

Dear Church Family and Friends:
Happy November!



With a Category 5 hurricane mowing down houses and trees in Jamaica at the moment, I'm reminded how the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) will be responding quickly in the recovery. Some of our money will be there too in the form of ongoing gifts from our church budget and new individual gifts going directly.

Also, many of you have just made your new pledges to the church to support our missions, staffing, programs and upkeep. On behalf of all of the Finance Committee, including Mary Herrmann, our chair of Stewardship, we appreciate this ongoing commitment. So far we are at \$205,540 pledged, with room for more to fund the coming year's budget.

We successfully marked a decade of service for Pastor Kim as well as a Laity Sunday Oct. 19 that reminded us of the gifts embedded in our lay membership in the form of Lucinda Edmunds, who spoke from the pulpit.

Also, your committee chairs will be gathering Nov. 16 for a Charge Conference that wraps up the year and approves the plans for the coming year. We will be welcoming our friends from Corona and Wesley UMC to join us in the Fellowship Hall and our friends from Highgrove, Grace and Moreno Valley UMC will be meeting also on our campus. Afterward, we will share a potluck together. Rev. Roy Riggs will be presiding over some of it and he promises to get us done with business quickly so we can enjoy the fellowship together.

Some of the reason we meet together like this with other United Methodist congregations is because we are a connectional church. We believe that we are stronger together than we are apart. When we pool our resources and communicate regularly, we can be more impactful as we address the struggles of this broken world.

At FUMCOR we regularly collect shelf stable food for Camp Anza to help disabled veterans and their families; we support Guardian Scholars of
(cont. on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

Volunteer Opportunities - Page 2

Organ Concert - Page 3

Halloween Hop - Page 4

Announcements - Page 5

Youth and Family Ministry - Page 6

United Methodist Men - Page 7

United Women in Faith - Page 8

Prayers and Praises - Page 9

Advent Begins - Page 10

Calendar of Events - Page 11



First United
Methodist Church
of Riverside

(cont. from page 1)

UCR and RCC to help them get through winter breaks; we continue to provide meals and support for Family Promise of Riverside and we are gathering toys to make Christmas morning brighter at the Hope Room at Wesley UMC.

I leave you with the thank you note from Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey of the Rio Texas Annual Conference, who writes in gratitude for the money FUMCOR sent at the time the river flooded near Texas church camps and swept away some campers and counselors. Lord, hear our prayer.
In gratitude and love,

Kris Lovekin,
Lay Leader



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
RIO TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Cynthia Fierro Harvey
Resident Bishop

October 9, 2025

The First United Methodist Church of Riverside
4845 Brockton Ave.
Riverside, CA 92506-0134

Dear The First United Methodist Church of Riverside,

In times of great need, I am especially grateful that we are part of a connectional church—a church that lives out its calling by sharing both burdens and blessings. The recent floods have brought unimaginable devastation to many families in the Hill Country and surrounding areas. The loss of life, the destruction of homes and livelihoods, and the disruption of daily life have left many reeling. And yet, in the midst of this heartbreak, your generosity has been a light in the darkness.

Thank you for your gift of \$1065 to support relief and recovery efforts. Your compassion and faithfulness will make a real and lasting difference. These funds will be directed to the areas of greatest need, as determined by our Disaster Response leadership, to ensure that help is given where it is most needed and most impactful.

Please continue to hold all those affected—and those responding—in your prayers. Together, we are embodying the love of Christ and reminding our neighbors that they are not alone.

With deep gratitude,
and in the hope of Christ,

Cynthia Fierro Harvey



Volunteer Opportunities

Shopping for the Children



Wesley UMC & FUMCOR elves are beginning their Christmas shopping for the children of the 60 registered families in need of help.

FUMCOR's gift tree will be up in the Narthex soon.

Cash donations will be accepted so Barbara Jo & Lee Ann can purchase gifts, but we are not using store gift cards this time. Or you are welcome to pick out your own gifts. It is okay to include a greeting card with your gift, but don't wrap them. All gifts are handed over to the families in a solid blue bag along with food items and clothing needs.

Turn in your gifts in the narthex or the office by Sunday, Dec. 7. Make it clear on the register near the tree if you are buying for a specific child or family so we will know who still needs a gift.

Thank you to all who have made this joint project possible for the past six years. It puts a smile on a child's face on Christmas morning!

Lee Ann will be out on the patio. Or call her at (951) 906-6452 with questions.

See's Candy Fundraiser

Our faithful finance committee member, David Fraser, said he will again be selling See's candy boxes as a fundraiser for the church. Each box has an assortment of delicious chocolates, and they make great stocking stuffers!

Sales of the candy will begin after our church service Nov. 23 and will end Dec. 21. Orders can be purchased via email to David Fraser at stephenministry@firstchurchriverside.org. For an order of four or more boxes, he will deliver for free.



Marilyn Robinson with her
pet rat



Jeff Benedict plays
Blues in the Night



Lee Ann is the ghost of
Christmas future



Yvonne Flagg



Jenn Mahl and Val Othon



The maestro Robert Phillips at the organ

Boos in the Night is a Hit

Glowing ghosts, ghoulish jack-o-lanterns, and a smoking cauldron set the mood for "Boos in the Night," our Oct. 25 Halloween organ concert. Clever costumes abounded among the attendees, who witnessed musical presentations ranging from the comically ridiculous to the jazzily sublime.

As game two of the World Series was well underway, saxophonist and Dodgers devotee Jeff Benedict knocked one out of the park with his soulful rendition of "Blues in the Night." Yvonne Flagg offered a chilling Gregorian chant about Judgment Day and a solemn Shakespearean song about the terrors of the midnight hour.

After intermission, the audience was stunned when six gigantic cockroaches burst out of the choir room. Before anyone could find a can of Raid, the insect pests danced the Macarena and generally ran amok. Then they swarmed at the front of the chancel, providing backing vocals and hilarious moves as Kris Lovekin sang "The Cockroach That Ate Cincinnati" in the guise of a horror-movie fan describing the scariest film she's ever seen. The audience responded most enthusiastically to this bit of musical mayhem. Many thanks to the dyspeptic roaches (Margie Baillod, Steve Kerrick, Greg Laird, Josh Ponnuraju, Leslie Tomlinson, and Jennifer Walker) and special thanks to Kris, who had a T-shirt custom-made for the occasion. The shirt depicts a terrifying movie poster for "The Cockroach That Ate Cincinnati," complete with a review from Rolling Stone, even though no such film about the ravenous roach was ever made. (See pictures of this on the next page.)

Scary organ music about Davy Jones (the ghost pirate, not the Monkee), marching gargoyles, and a Shakespearean monster complemented classics by Edvard Grieg, César Franck, and Johann Sebastian Bach. All in all, the audience was subjected to a huge variety of unsettling sights and sounds, yet they generously contributed \$1,850 to the Organ Maintenance Dedicated Fund as of press time. This amount will be matched by an exceedingly beneficent anonymous donor.

Thanks to these gifts, we will continue the repair and restoration of our magnificent pipe organ so it can serve this congregation for decades to come.

— Robert Phillips



Kris Lovekin sings about the Cockroach that Ate Cincinnati in front of this scary horde at the organ concert.

Pizza and Dancing at Halloween Hop



*A tradition of dancing
and pizza and candy
continued on Oct. 26
with disc jockeys and lots
of conga lines.
Photos by Kelly Weakly*



We Opened the Doors

Saturday, Oct. 25

Thanks to our tour guides who opened the doors of the sanctuary for Riverside's Doors Open event. Visitors checked out the stained glass, listened to the organ and had a chance to learn a little bit about our building's history. We participate along with many other churches, museums and historical resources in the city. This is an annual way that we introduce ourselves to the community. At right, Mike Alfred explains some of the stained glass to visitors.



Camp Anza Collection

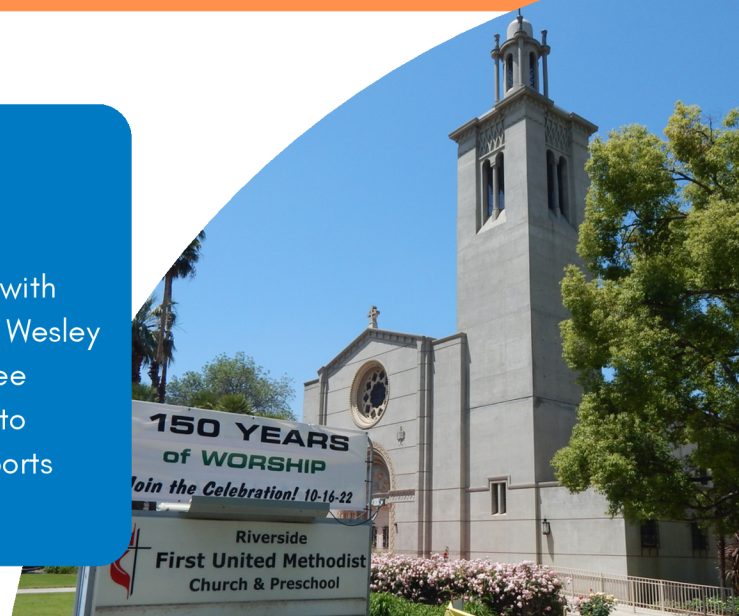
Church and Society has partnered with Camp Anza, a residential facility for disabled veterans and their families. At the end of the month, food supplies can run low. We want to help our vets by keeping their food pantry supplied. Some people in the congregation are aware of this, and Cindy Marr and Lyn Knowles have already made two trips to Camp Anza to resupply food. In honor of Veterans' Day, won't you help fill the pantry? We are asking for donations of canned goods and other shelf stable items. We will bless your donations during a church service on Nov. 9, as a way to honor our veterans. This mission will continue after Veterans' Day. When you go shopping, will you add an extra food item to your cart and bring it to the narthex? The collection box is on the same pew as the hunger bags. Camp Anza is operated by Mercy House and it is located in a renovated building in Riverside that was actually used for military housing during WWII.



Charge Conference

3 pm Sunday, Nov. 16

This year's Charge Conference will be in the Fellowship Hall with Rev. Roy Riggs presiding. This will be a joint conference with Wesley UMC, Corona UMC and the Box Springs collaborative of three churches. Only committee chairs and ministry leaders need to attend. Our office manager Becky Ruiz is busy preparing reports and budgets for this meeting. Thank you Becky!



U.P.L.I.F.T. for Youth!

Don't miss out!

Sunday night Nov. 2 from 5pm to 6:30 pm

in the Youth Room upstairs.

Pizza will be provided.

Our focus is 5th grade thru high school,
but family members welcome.

Mark your calendars and come join us
for fun and fellowship!

Children and Youth Ministries

Introducing...

Parents Night Out

**Parents have a couple of hours...
to yourself!**

This will be a fun-filled evening for children
featuring crafts, dinner, and playtime!

Our first event will be on

**Friday, November 21st
from 5pm to 7:30 pm**

We're welcoming children ages
18 months through elementary school.

Cost: \$25 per child and \$10 for siblings.

We're hoping for great participation!

We're hosting a special
"Friendsgiving"

Youth Group Night

**Sunday, November 16
from 5pm to 6:30 pm**

We're so thankful for each of you.

Come enjoy an evening of
fellowship, food, and fun!



THANK YOU!!

for your generous donations to

**Mary S. Roberts
Animal Shelter!**

We delivered all the items and were
treated to a wonderful tour and
some fun time with the kittens!

The kids absolutely loved it.
It's such a blessing to support this
amazing part of our local
community, that offers so many
great programs for children.
Thank you again for making our
charity drive such a success.

YOU MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE!



Questions about or ideas for children and youth programs?

Call Christina Graves 951-683-7831

United Methodist Men

Sunday, Nov. 9



If These Women Could Talk...

The United Methodist Men will offer a program on the hidden impacts of violence at 11:15 am Sunday, Nov. 9. Cost for a delicious lunch is \$6 per person or \$20 per family. All are welcome.

Riverside author Jo Scott-Coe is a Professor of English at Riverside City College, where she was named RCC's Distinguished Faculty Lecturer in part for her archival research in histories of mass violence and abuse.

She has been a featured guest and essayist in the media, including Time magazine, Salon, Houston Matters, the Jon and Ken Show, The Press-Enterprise and many others.

Unheard Witness: The Life and Death of Kathy Leissner Whitman (University of Texas Press) is Scott-Coe's third book. It foregrounds a young woman's experience of domestic abuse, resistance, and hope until her husband Charles Whitman stabs her to death and goes to commit the shocking mass shooting at the University of Texas at Austin in 1966—now approaching its 60th memorial anniversary.

Public violence often follows violence in the home, yet such private crimes continue to be erased in the public imagination as they are overshadowed by the murder of strangers.

Scott-Coe's previous books are *Teacher at Point Blank* and *MASS: A Sniper, a Father, and a Priest*, a groundbreaking exploration of the relationship between the 1966 UT Austin sniper and his priest mentor, Rev. Joseph "Gil" Leduc, who was later accused of sexual abuse by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

In 1966, Kathy Leissner Whitman was a 23-year-old teacher and writer who left essays and letters that allow a rare glimpse into how one woman described and sought to change her life in the face of a coercive, controlling and violent partner. The book has helped readers grasp the link between domestic abuse and mass shootings.

When she is not writing or teaching, Scott-Coe enjoys reading, experimenting with recipes, biking, and traveling with her husband, Justin Coe.

Scott-Coe occasionally facilitates community writing workshops for the Inlandia Institute in Southern California.

The United Methodist Men continue a Friday Prayer Breakfast at 7 am in Mary's Kitchen. All men are invited to join for fellowship, faith, coffee, donuts, and pastries.



Speaker Jo Scott-Coe



Use this QR code to browse or buy the book by Jo Scott-Coe



UNHEARD WITNESS

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF
KATHY LEISSNER WHITMAN

JO SCOTT-COE



United Women in Faith

Events and Meetings

Nov. 11 - Executive Meeting (Mary's Kitchen) - 10 am
Budget planning

November 13 Lunch Bunch
We are going Italian at Mamma Mia's
10971 Magnolia Ave. - 11 am
Come join us.

Walk About!

With the cooler weather, we are meeting at 8 am now!
Meet at Ryan Bonamino Park in the back parking lot near the play ground.

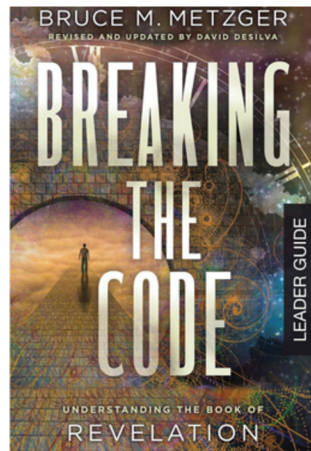


Crafters, we are fast approaching Alternative Gift Fair held on the first Sunday in December. If you have been making things for the Fair you need to get them to us by mid-November.
Contact: Pam Conlin
pjoffroad@gmail.com
951-237-5470



Bible Study!

"Breaking the Code"
Understanding The Book of Revelation
by Bruce Metzger
Thursday evenings
(Zoom) 6:45 pm



October Lunch Bunch

At Sam's Pita and Kabab in October.
As always good food and especially good company
because Lisa was with us.

Prayers & Praises

We pray for...

Josh Salmon, Jim Conlin, Jeff Ashworth, Loretta Cudney, Rizzy Manacop, Margie Baillod, Lucille Novak, Jun Valino, Jon Dugan, Patrick Russell, Derek and Robin Austin, Emilie Gorham, Devyn Salmon, Marie Madden, Mary Boon, Gitanjali Spencer, Liz Jennings, Donna Woodard, George Callow, Bill Ashworth, Norma Nelson, Pat Beals, Ed Lamers, Mack Davis, Michael Thompson, Melva Cooke, Calvin Narayan and Shail Singh, John and Susan Logger, Michael Thompson, Jim Ashworth, Melissa Williams, Kennedy Williams, Bill and Helen Nuchols, Mary Herrmann, Marge Wolter, Michelle Arguelles, De'Ann McWilliams, Robert and Benita Roberts, Jazz Roberts and family, Josephine Essien and family, Cheryl and Roy Riggs and family, our families, our neighbors, our country, our world.

Sovereign of Creation,
all that we have comes from you.
We gather in your presence,
surrounded by so great a cloud of
witnesses,
people from every tribe and nation,
every kindred and tongue,
to lift our voices in praise,
to be transformed into your saints,
to be sent out to gather others to
share the eternal banquet.
Receive the praise we offer,
work in us and through us.
You alone are holy,
you alone are the Most High,
you alone are worthy of our praise.
Glory to you, O God,
and to the Lamb, our Shepherd,
and to the Spirit that unites us all,
today and ever more.
Amen.



Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

November Anniversaries

12 Tim and Gretel Noble
26 John Fregeau and Lynn Wright
26 Doug and Marilyn Robinson



November Birthdays

1 Eureko Williams
2 Mary Bidwell
3 Carolina Renteria
5 Allison George
6 DeAnn McWilliams
7 Gabriel Arguelles
7 Hannah Arguelles
8 Richard Austin
9 Paula Kaufhold
9 Kevin Simpson
9 Katrina Zeeb
11 Roy Riggs
12 Ji Tai Kim
13 Jason Handen
13 Gayla Lonsbery
18 Gracie Hough
18 Kelsey Weakly
19 Daryl Salmon
19 Robert Ream
19 Beryl Corson
20 Andrew Gaumer
21 Melissa Williams
21 Lucinda Edmunds
23 Gregory Hough
23 Bill Nuchols
24 Bob Schiffer
26 Jessica Bennett
29 Brent Levine

***Absent from our midst -
present with the Lord!***

Margaret Berger

Ryan Dungan

Kenneth Geiger

Gaddiel Gwira

Beulah Leake

Mimi (Melva) Luker

Robin Renteria

Ruben Renteria

Chandra Roberts

William Waite

Claudia Weber-Timmerman

Patricia Williams

Bill Woodard

**And all our loved ones
who have gone before us.**



Christmas Brunch

Nov. 30 After church

Faith and Fellowship invites the congregation to a Christmas Brunch after church. This is a tradition that includes delicious food and sparkling cider and a celebration to launch the season of Advent.



Blue Christmas Peace

Dec. 2 12 Noon and 7 pm

What do people, who are “blue” at Christmas need? Reflection, hope and healing. The Rev. Beverly Devine will lead a peaceful experience for people who want to acknowledge the deep darkness while they look for the light. Give yourself and our world the gift of Christmas peace.

Alternative Gift Fair is Dec. 7

Save the date for a gift fair that supports a better world, including vendors such as Heifer International, Guatemala Project, Pencils and Dreams, Human Migration Institute, United Women in Faith, the Riverside Food Co-op, Soroptimist International, and many more. The fair, which lasts from 11 am to 3 pm, is an interfaith and sustainable event that includes music, soup and community. Invite friends.



Poinsettia Dedications

Don't forget to dedicate your poinsettias to loved ones by Dec. 5. The cost is \$20. Please put your request in writing. Checks should be made out to First United Methodist Church (or FUMCOR) and marked “Poinsettia.” Donors may pick up their plants after the Christmas Eve worship services.

Ongoing Events

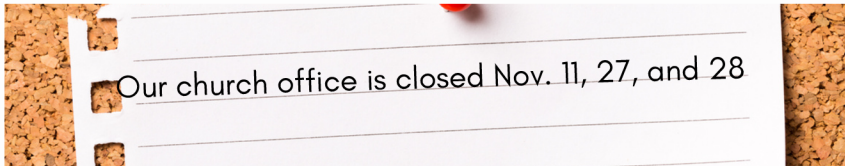
- Chapel Prayer Circle: 1st Sundays - 9:15 am
- Sunday Worship: 10 am
- Sunday School for Children: 10:15 am
- Youth Worship: November 9 & 23 - 10:15 am
- U.P.L.I.F.T. Youth Group: November 2 & 16, 5 pm
- First Sundays: Holy Communion
- Third Sundays: Response Band leads worship
- Third Sundays: Faith and Fellowship Events
- Bell Choir rehearsal: Tuesdays, 7 pm
- The Response rehearsal: Wednesdays, 6:30 pm
- Adult choir rehearsal: Thursdays, 7 pm
- Men's Friday Prayer Breakfast: 7 am

Special Events

- English Country Dance - 3 pm Nov. 2 (Fellowship Hall)
- Charge Conference - 3 pm Nov. 16 (Sanctuary)
- Hanging of the Greens - 11:15 Nov. 23 (Sanctuary)
- The Habit Fundraiser - 11:15 to 9 pm Nov. 23 (The Plaza)
- Christmas Brunch - 11:15 am Nov. 30 (Fellowship Hall)
- Blue Christmas - 12 noon and 7 pm Dec. 2 (Sanctuary)
- Poinsettia Order/office: (\$20 per plant), deadline: Dec. 5



**Don't Forget to Fall
Back Sunday Nov. 2!**



Need to Reach Us?

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(951) 683-7831 (Mon to Fri 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
secretary@firstchurchriverside.org

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Yvonne Flagg, Choir Director
choirdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Gayla Lonsbery, Bell Director
belldirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Robert Phillips, Organist
organist@firstchurchriverside.org

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bradtomlinson4@yahoo.com



First United

Methodist Church of Riverside