

APRIL 2026

The Messenger

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

He is Risen!

Dearly Beloved,

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

As we gather this Easter, we celebrate the cornerstone of our faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In a world often shadowed by uncertainty, war, and division, the empty tomb declares that love has won, light has triumphed over darkness, and death does not have the final word.

The resurrection is not just an event to be remembered; it is a new life to be lived. As United Methodists, we are called to be an "Easter People," acting as witnesses to the transforming power of God's grace in our homes, our community, and beyond. I invite you to reflect on our commitment to Christ and to live out this new life by loving our neighbors, welcoming all, and serving those in need.

I encourage you to embrace the joy of this season. Let us carry the hope of the Resurrection into every corner of our lives, knowing that the Risen Lord walks with us.

I look forward to celebrating this glorious day with you. Happy Easter! Please join us for this year's Holy Week services and Easter Sunday:

- **Maundy Thursday Service** (Joint): April 2, 7 pm at Wesley UMC (5770 Arlington Ave, Riverside, CA 92504)
- **Good Friday Service** (Joint): April 3, 7 pm at First UMC of Riverside
- **Easter Sunday Worship**: April 5, 10 am at First UMC of Riverside

In the Risen Christ,

The Rev. J. T. Kim, Pastor

Our children waved palm branches on Palm Sunday, as the donkey looks on



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Drive-In Movie Fun



Families arrived to turn cardboard boxes into cars for a drive-in movie, popcorn and even a car wash on Saturday, March 14 in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks to the Outreach committee and all the volunteers for this fun event for families.



A Nice Surprise



Terri Whieldon (right) created a piece of fabric art that uses FUMCOR stained glass windows as part of the design. We put our names in a bag and Kris Lovekin was the lucky winner! This was on the last Lenten soup supper when Christina Graves was the speaker and Jennifer and Leslie sang a duet, accompanied by Yvonne Flagg. Thanks Terri!



Terri Whieldon

Volunteer Opportunities

Housing is Crucial

Claire Jefferson-Glipa inspired us with a talk during Lenten dinner on Feb. 25 to do more to advocate for supportive housing, so we wrote postcards to our city council representatives. Thanks to Sophie Weiss for this great idea. Family Promise of Riverside, which serves families with children who need housing support, will come back to shelter on our church campus on May 1.

Contact Kris Lovekin if you are called to work with homeless families in some way. They always need gift cards and volunteers.



Easter Candy Needed

Faith and Fellowship is starting to collect Easter candy for the egg hunt on Sunday, April 5. Give to Kelly Weakly or drop at the office. This is a great time to help us make our young families feel welcome.

Make it a Habit!



On the fourth Sunday of each month, we will hold a fundraiser at The Habit in the Riverside Plaza. Let's try again on Sunday, April 26.

We Are Easter People!

Our Lenten journey has helped us see what leaps of faith people have taken in our congregation. Thanks to our Lenten speakers: Claire Jefferson-Glipa, Beverly DeFrance, Josh Ponnuraju, Ben and Yvette Lomax and Christina Graves. Thanks to our singers: Yvonne Flagg, Phil Bremenstuhl, Kris Lovekin, Sean Lomax, Jennifer Walker and Leslie Tomlinson. Loretta Cudney wrangled the soups and the fellowship groups made the soups. We had especially nice desserts this year!



Ben and Yvette Lomax



Bev DeFrance



Josh Ponnuraju

Get ready for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and then an Easter celebration full of brass, voices, new members, butterflies, Easter eggs and do not forget your flowers from the garden for our cross.



Maundy Thursday communion will be at 7 pm April 2 at Wesley UMC on Arlington Ave.

Responding to the Call

Faith in Action



Walking for Hungry People

The CROP Walk is an annual walk for hunger that involves many of the churches in Riverside. This year it took place on Sunday, March 22 and altogether the local walk raised \$24,680. Our own FUMCOR walkers raised \$4,350. In both cases that is an improvement from last year. Thanks to Kevin Simpson (at right) who has been our church's CROP Walk organizer for years. The money goes to help hungry people, some of them in our own area. This year Sophie Weiss (lower right) and the Youngish Group made beautiful signs for the walk.



Kevin Simpson



Sophie Weiss

Milestone Moments...



Bev and Becky

Our Staff/Parish Relations Committee is working to replace Becky Ruiz, our longtime financial manager. We are about to begin interviews. This would be a fine time to pray for your church volunteers so that they make a good choice in an important position in the church.



Five of our children received Bibles in church after a "Know Your Bible" class. They are: Corinne Graves, Rylan Bottrell, Jocelyn Williams, Aubrie Jane Orozco, and Grayson Anthony Orozco. Congratulations!



Save the Dates - VBS 2026!

June 8 - 12

Vacation Bible School

Mark your calendars now...

You won't want to miss this exciting week filled with faith, friends, and fun!

We are also looking for volunteers to help make VBS an amazing week.

If you're interested in serving the youth and children,

please contact Christina

childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

or call 951-212-5725

Happy Spring!

As the beauty of spring surrounds us and new life begins to bloom, may we be reminded of God's goodness and renewal in our own lives.

"See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come."

— Song of Solomon 2:11-12

Wishing you a joyful and refreshing season filled with hope, growth, and God's blessings!

We are also looking for volunteers to help with our growing ministries. Are you interested in supporting Sunday School or helping out with Vacation Bible School (VBS)? We truly need your help, and we promise...it's a lot of fun (really, it is!).



firstchurchriverside.org



YOUTH GROUP

April 12 5pm to 6:30 pm

Join us for a fun and meaningful evening at Youth Group! Come enjoy delicious pizza, great fellowship, and a chance to connect with one another. Everyone is welcome, we'd love to see you there!

More Youth Activities! Did you know?

Young people in grades middle school thru high school (6-12) are invited twice a month to the youth room upstairs where together, they will read and discuss the Bible and its relevance to their lives.

These interactive lessons often include an object lesson, game, or other activity, as well as early access to the coffee and donuts after church.

Join in this fellowship on the 2nd & 4th Sunday after Children's Moment, where you can get to know other Christians your age! Bring a friend!

Contact Lucinda for more information!

lucindaedmunds1@outlook.com

Nurturing New Life

Our caterpillars that have been eating and eating and are maturing. Some are eager to emerge from their cocoon and have moved into their butterfly "Pavillion."

We are excited to watch them progress to full-fledged Painted Lady butterflies. Children can help us release them after church on Easter, April 5. 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!

Questions? Contact Christina Graves at
childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

United Methodist Men

Sunday, April 12



President of La Sierra University Will Speak

The United Methodist Men will serve lunch after church on Sunday, April 12 with a program about Home@LaSierra, which will offer a strong start for youth who are aging out of the foster care system. Our speaker is the President of La Sierra University, Christon Arthur. He arrived at La Sierra in July, 2024.

The Home@La Sierra Endowment will offer a transformational educational lifeline and a strong start for youth who are aging out of the foster care system. Scholarships through Home@La Sierra will cover tuition and housing while the scholarship recipients study at La Sierra University. Along their journey, they will receive support toward successfully navigating the college experience and entering adulthood with purpose and strength. While enrolled through the endowment program, they will be supported with mentoring, spiritual care, holistic wellness, academic support, and community and family connection.

Arthur has spent 30 years in education, starting in lower education, then as a professor and associate dean at Tennessee State University and then in multiple roles at Andrews University in Michigan, as provost, dean of graduate studies and dean of research. A native of Grenada, he is married and has one grown son. He holds a bachelor's degree in theology and advanced degrees in education, management. In June he received an MBA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

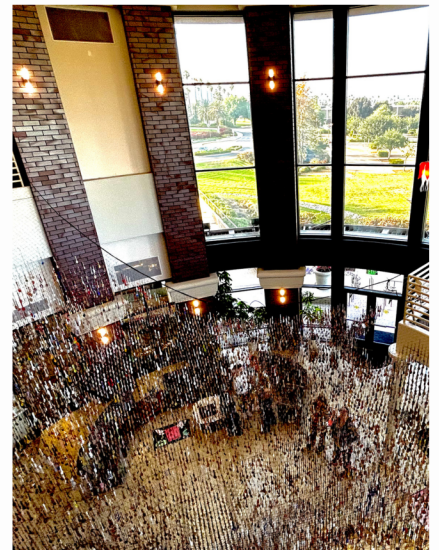
The Home@LaSierra Endowment aims to raise \$2 million. A gala is planned for this October as a public launch and fundraiser for the scholarship program.

Further information and an online donation link is at <https://lasierra.edu/donate/>.

Cost for lunch is \$6 per person or \$20 per family.



Christon Arthur



The view from the Zapara School of Business

An Update on the United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men continue to meet for a weekly prayer breakfast each Friday morning at 7 am in Mary's Kitchen to share news about those who need prayer.

Also, the UMM voted to give a \$1,000 scholarship to Dylan Grimes through the Education committee to fund his education at RCC.

The UMM will hold no auction this Spring because there are not many students applying for scholarships. Also, the UMM presented Sophie Weiss and Dave Fraser with gift cards for their untiring assistance at the monthly luncheons. A donation was made to the Salvation Army in December. Methodist Men purchased an electric griddle for the church kitchen. And President David Leonard reports that his term will be done in June.



United Women in Faith

Saturday Sea Cruise! *This is going to be fun!*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sail on one of the small luxury cruise lines? Oceania Cruises advertises exceptional service with one crew member for every one and one-half guests.

All their specialty restaurants are included in the sailing price, and they have won many awards for culinary excellence.

Lee Ann and Daryl Salmon recently sailed the Mediterranean on an Oceania cruise and Lee Ann will share the experience with you on Saturday, April 11 at 10 am.

She will show you pictures of the ports, the rooms, and the food.

Join United Women in Faith in the Chandler Lounge for a Mediterranean escape. Refreshments will be served.



Saturday, April 25

The UWF is taking part in the Wood Streets Yard Sale again this year. The date is April 25 from 8 am to 3 pm. If you have things you wish to donate, they can be dropped off at the church between 10 am and 2 pm. We will also need help with set up and take down. if you are available for either please contact Pam Conlin at 951-237-5470. Set up is at 7 am and take down at 2 pm.

Key News & Notes



April 9 - 11 am Lunch Bunch
Riverside Airport Cafe 6951 Flight Rd

April 11 - 10 am UWF Meeting in Chandler Lounge

Lee Ann Salmon is our speaker.

April 24 - 9 am Yard Sale preparation.
Meet in Asbury Room

April 25 - 7 am Yard Sale

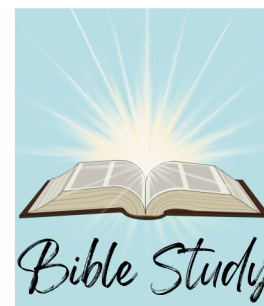


Walk About

Every Wednesday at a NEW TIME
8 am at

Ryan Bonaminio Park.

We meet in the last parking area near the playground.



Bible Study

New Bible Study begins
Thursday April 9, 2026

April 16, April 23, and May 9
We meet via Zoom at 7 pm

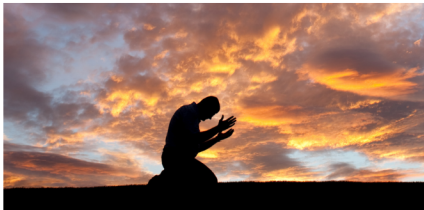
Please Contact:

Lyn Knowles daselwonk@aol.com
Karen Eagans kkeagan@aol.com

Easter Prayers & Praises

April Special Worship Services

- 2nd - 7 pm -Maundy Thursday Service at Wesley UMC - our choirs combine with Robert Phillips, organist.
- 3rd - 7 pm - Good Friday Service at FUMCOR with Wesley UMC joining us.
- 5th - 10 am - Easter Sunday worship with Aldersgate Chorale with Brass Ensemble, Allegro Ringers and Robert Phillips, organist



Prayer of Confession by Dr. Tom Cheatham

O God, still creating,
we hear your promises
of a new day
of joy and peace,
and we are skeptical.
We expect things to go on
the same as they always have,
from bad to worse.
The past will keep us guilty,
the future will make us afraid,
and the present will burden us
with too little time and
too much to do.
Forgive our lack of faith,
our quickness to believe
that you do not hear us,
and our pessimism
about tomorrow.
Do a new thing in our hearts,
and let us be glad and
rejoice in your abundant care;
through Christ, we pray. Amen.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

April Anniversaries

- 2 Don and Carlyn Knowles
5 Greg and Lisa Laird
8 Brian and Susan Tomlinson
8 David and Valerie Weise
11 Michael and Valerie Othon
27 Bill and Helen Nuchols

April Birthdays

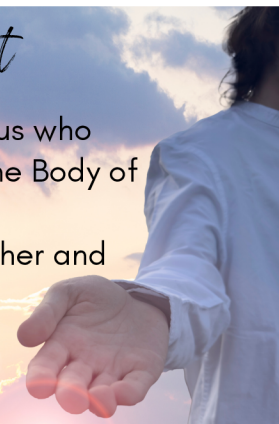
- 1 Evelyn Turkson
3 James Sizer
6 Dana Traver
7 Josh Ponnuraju
8 John Logger
10 Steve Kerrick
15 Connor Britain
16 Lisa Thomas
17 Elizabeth Wood-Baisie
18 Skylar McDonald
20 Marge Wolter
21 Lillian Zeeb
22 June Van Genuchten
23 Kim Austin
24 Becki Brawner
24 Kyle Grimes
24 Gail Murray
25 Sean Clark
27 Austin Weidinger
29 Barbara J. Wilson
30 Don Knowles
30 Richard Rajaratnam

Concerns

Regan Pope, Doug Robinson, Donna Woodard, Eduardo Reyes, Tina Dungan, Lupe Vela, Lyle Adams, Ronnie Tovar, Roger Murray, Lolita Manacop, Grace Reyes, Sharon Henry, Don Greywood, Jun Valino, Wayne Speir, Rebecca Konegen, Jon Dugan, Marie Madden, Gitanjali Spencer, Liz Jennings, Pat Beals, George Callow, Bill Ashworth, Norma Nelson, Ed Lamers, Mack Davis, Michael Thompson, Marge Wolter, John and Susan Logger, Melissa Williams, Bill and Helen Nuchols, Mary Herrmann, Jim Ashworth, Mary Boon, Melva Cooke, Michelle Arguelles, Robert and Benita Roberts, the family of Mary Bidwell Scott and De'Ann McWilliams, the family of Connie Taylor, our families, our neighbors, country, and world

A New Start

Easter is a new start for all of us who journey together in grace as the Body of Christ, for it is the good news that binds us together and empowers us to continue on the path set before us.



ALLELUIA

Highlighted Events

- April 5: Easter Sunday - 10 am followed by egg hunt and butterfly release
- April 13 through 17: Pastor on vacation
- April 25: Wood Streets Yard Sale - 7 am
- April 26: Fundraiser at The Habit - 11 am

Ongoing Events

- Sunday Worship: 10 am
- Sunday School for Children: 10:15 am
- Youth Worship 2nd and 4th Sundays: 10:15 am
- First Sundays-Holy Communion
- Second Sunday-Men's Lunch w/speaker after church.
- 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
- Aldersgate Chorale rehearsal: Thursdays, 7 pm
- Men's Prayer Breakfast: Fridays, 7 am

Gas vs. Electric

We have a Board of Trustees, led by Brian Tomlinson, working hard on upgrading A/C for the church property in response to vandalism of the units.

- The sanctuary units have been repaired, are still natural gas powered and are back in use.
- The choir room unit was older, so it was replaced with an electric heat pump. That will be running on green energy. So kudos for that. The kitchen in the Fellowship Hall is now all electric.
- The preschool and the second floor of the education building is now operating with electric heat pump technology running the A/C.
- Trustees have heard from several solar power companies offering bids for solar panels. One huge problem is that it is expensive to install the system. But it would save us on our bills over the long term.
- Thank a trustee for all their hard work. In addition to Brian, we have Greg Laird, Sophie Weiss, Daryl Salmon, Melissa Beals, Scott Kirkwood and Dan Lonsbery.

Need to Reach Us?

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Yvonne Flagg, Choir Director
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Robert Phillips, Organist
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