

JULY 2026

The Messenger

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

Let Us Astonish the World

Dear First Church Family and Friends:

Peace be with you all!

The California-Pacific Annual Conference, held June 17 to 20 in La Quinta, included the ordination of new pastors, the reappointment of Pastor J.T. Kim to our church to start in on his 11th year, and an award that recognizes our faithful service on apportionments. Plus, there was lots of singing, worship and voting. Kris Lovekin, Greg Laird, Sophie Weiss and Leslie Tomlinson joined the pastor as voting delegates.



Pastor Kim greets Rev. Dr. Lincoln Galloway and his wife Romania

Our Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank presided, but she brought in guest preachers and arranged for June 19 to be devoted to recognizing Juneteenth, the day the last slaves were told that they were free (two years after the Emancipation Proclamation.)

Our theme this year was "Astonish!" It means that we are coming into our power as a justice-centered denomination after a long and bruising fight over LGBT ordination that divided the denomination and reduced the size of our United Methodist connection. Our church is now fully welcoming of LGBT pastors. We no longer invest in fossil fuels, and we will pay our apportionments to our conference in a 10-percent tithe of our church income. We are in the middle tier with some churches paying 9 percent and others paying 11 percent. The system is more transparent now, and it acknowledges that some churches have more and should be paying more.

We heard more about lay training programs open to all of the congregation. If you want to be part of training, let the pastor or the lay leader know.

We heard wonderful preaching from Bishop Delores Williamston of the Louisiana conference, who noted that we all have empty containers that can be filled with oil that is poured out like a miracle from God.

(cont.)

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Astonish the World (cont.)

One example of this for our church is our large buildings and parking lot can accommodate new ministries and events, especially since we have cleaned out cupboards and shelves.

This year is a 70th anniversary of the first year that women were ordained in the United Methodist Church.

To see more of the photos from the 2026 Cal-Pac Annual Conference, go here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/calpacumc/>

To see some of the videos and the legislation, go here:

<https://www.calpacumc.org/ac2025/#1742510581553-23652061-e479>



Kris, Rev. Kate, Greg, Pastor Kim, Leslie, Sophie

District Superintendent
Rev. Moonyoung Lee



Greg receives the 100 percent apportionment award

Pastor Melissa Rusler with
Pastor Kim and Greg



Pastor John Yoon and Kris



Pastor Mateo and Betsy, from
Borrego Springs

Volunteer Opportunities

Food Drive for Vets

Church and Society continues in partnership with Camp Anza, a veterans housing complex in Riverside. They especially need staple goods, like pancake mix, soups, boxes of Mac and Cheese, cereal and canned items. Be creative, throw a tub of frosting in with a box of cake mix and call it a birthday package. There is a box in the narthex to collect your donations.

Reading Ministry

Family Promise of Riverside has a program on Tuesday nights called "Book Buddies." Just show up and read to children in our own upstairs Sunday School rooms. Claire Jefferson-Glipa invited us all to be involved with donations or hands-on help at a recent donor appreciation dinner. Find out more at

www.fpRiverside.org/volunteer

Socks Galore



After the Father's Day sock toss, Cindy Marr, Lee Ann Salmon and Barbie McEvoy delivered all the donated socks to the HOPE room at Wesley UMC for distribution.



Invite a friend!

5 to 7 pm – Water Slide and Backpack Giveaway on the front lawn

5 to 9 pm – Bring lawn chairs and games and look for trike rides and delicious hot dogs and drinks in the back parking lot. There is a \$5 donation per car.

9 pm – Settle in and watch the City of Riverside fireworks off Mt. Rubidoux. KOLA radio on 99.9 FM will play music designed for the show.

The 4th of July is Wetter

By Kris Lovekin

Our church parking lot is perfect for viewing the Mt. Rubidoux fireworks and we offer it up to the community each year, using it as a fundraiser for Faith And Fellowship. Lots of families come and the outreach committee has decided to add a time for a waterslide and a backpack giveaway.

We are calling it “Fourth of July Water Fun and Fireworks.”

It makes sense to bring out the water slide on the front lawn while families are already on the property. It will be a good picnic spot for families and it replaces the other Summer backpack giveaway.

Our back parking lot is where we will have cars park and the boy scouts will be selling hot dogs and drinks from the Scout House. Brian Tomlinson will give rides on the three-wheeled bike.

Remember to mention this spot to a neighbor or a friend and offer to go with them!





Cooling Off at VBS

Our Vacation Bible School June 8 to 12 attracted dozens of children, with adults and youth helping to lead them. Our theme, "Snowball Mountain Challenge," inspired igloos, polar bears, snowball fights, gravity and downhill racing. We had Bible stories, music time, crafts, science, recreation and of course, snacks.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the volunteers, families, and children who participated. Thanks to leaders Christina Graves, Lucinda Edmunds, and all the volunteers and teen helpers. You made the week a success!





United Women in Faith

Weekly Walk About



UWF members meet at 7:30 am every Wednesday at Ryan Bonaminio Park. We meet in the last parking area near the playground. Come join us for a morning walk at your own pace.



July 9 Lunch Bunch

Plan to join in the fun at 11 am!

Hanger 24 in Canyon Crest Town Centre.

5225 Canyon Crest Dr. #58

July 18th - Morning with Kris

Kris Lovekin will share about her trip to Tofino, on Vancouver Island in Canada. Her family has history with this island. Join United Women in Faith on Saturday, July 18 at 10 am in the Chandler Lounge and discover a place of beauty right on the water. Snacks will be served.



The Lovekins enjoy the sunset view on the water

Book Corner

-- History --

"Heart of Fire: An Immigrant Daughter's Story"
an autobiography by Senator Mazie K. Hirono

-- More spiritual --

"Light of the World"
by Dr Andrew C S Koh

-- For Fun --

"The Lost Bride Trilogy"
by Nora Roberts





or more information, please

contact:

Christina Graves

📞 951-212-5725



June 30- July 30th. Parents may drop off their children (ages 18 months to going into Kinder) for childcare. Parents can enjoy a break, and kids can come enjoy fun summer activities. Cost per day is \$25 per child/\$15 for siblings. Attend all 3 days in a week \$60/ week per child.

childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org



First United

Methodist Church of Riverside
4845 Brockton Ave. Riversid

Congrats to Our Grads....



Fatafehi "Fehi" Tusi Tuihalamaka, kindergarten (granddaughter of Mary Mamea). Another granddaughter, Velonika, graduated from high school

Rylan Bottrell, from sixth grade

From middle school

Julia Zeeb
Teagan Bong
Carlie Renteria
Kristin Beals

From college:

Kentaro Davies, Irvine Valley College.

Tyler Young (grandson of Patti Gardenias), California State Fullerton

John-Paul McDonald (son of John McDonald) UC Riverside.

Mateo Mamea (son of Mary Mamea) earned his Master's of Divinity from Claremont School of Theology.

SUMMER

Our Sunday Night Youth Group will be taking a break during the month of July. We hope everyone enjoys a fun and restful summer, and we look forward to seeing all of our students returning in August for another great season of fellowship, games, and growing together in faith!



United Methodist Men

Coming in for a Landing

At the final UMM lunch for this year on June 14, Bob Nelson talked about his experiences as a pilot in the early years of the Vietnam conflict, using his significant expertise in short field landings. Above, one of his prized possessions, a model plane with his grandchildren peeking out from the windows.



The lunch tradition will take a break during the summer, but Daryl Salmon will take over finding speakers for the coming year. Matt Gorder will lead Friday morning prayer breakfasts. Thanks to David Leonard for a year of fine programs.

Friday morning prayer breakfasts will continue during July but will take a break in August.



David Leonard passes the UMM notebook to incoming leaders Matt Gorder and Daryl Salmon

Father's Day Fun

On June 21 we celebrated Father's Day with a cake walk and a sock toss. Pastor Kim celebrated winning a cake; Scott Kirkwood shows off a cake decorated by Helen Kirkwood; Daryl Salmon shows his sock toss technique. All the socks were donated to the HOPE room at Wesley United Methodist Church.



Kris Lovekin, Bob Nelson, Pastor Kim



Prayers & Praises

Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

July Anniversaries

- 1 Scott and DeAnn McWilliams
- 7 Brent Levine and Emily Hoppe
- 18 Steve and Ruth Walker

July Birthdays

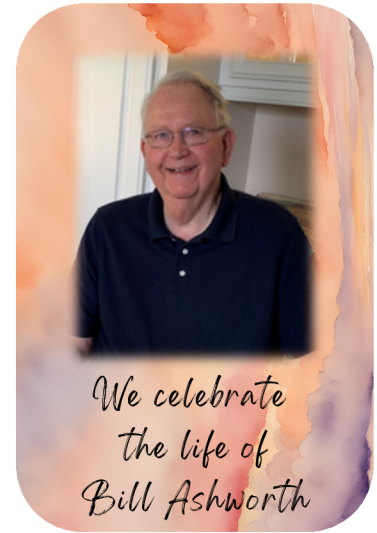
- 1 Gigi Johnson Handen
- 4 Dan Lonsbery
- 5 Delaney Britain
- 5 Valerie Othon
- 6 Elizabeth Haught
- 9 Lee Bayer
- 9 Judy Bello
- 11 Christina Graves
- 15 David Fraser
- 15 Esther Kim
- 15 Michael Thompson
- 16 David Weise
- 17 Mateo Mamea
- 17 Donna Woodard
- 18 Mele Tupou
- 18 Kaley Weakly
- 22 Jessie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

August Anniversaries

- 8 Mateo and Nidia Mamea
- 18 Daryl and Lee Ann Salmon

August Birthdays

- 4 Addyson Erickson
- 4 Ian George
- 5 Annie Clark
- 5 Paloma Clark
- 5 Patti Gardenias
- 5 Cheryl Hanrahan
- 7 Angela Lim
- 9 Tim Noble
- 9 Amelia Nieto
- 10 Nidia Mamea
- 13 Rollin Edmunds
- 16 Joan Warren
- 17 Loretta Cudney
- 17 Cindy Qualtieri
- 18 Yvonne Flagg
- 19 Sostenes (JR) Vela
- 20 Valerie Weise
- 21 Marcia Bales
- 23 Joan Brown
- 25 Phil Bremenstuhl
- 26 Jaeman Lim
- 26 James Son
- 26 Sophie Weiss
- 29 Chalmer Tomlinson
- 31 Stan Cook Jr.



We hold in prayer ...

Rollin Edmunds, Lee Ann Salmon, Dean Michalka, James Herron, Eric Russler, Terri Whieldon, Tom Kennedy, Christina Graves, Bob Bahnsen, Don Larsen, Neko Williams, David Cardenas, Gary Bruggeman, Regan Pope, Eduardo Reyes, Tina Dungan, Lupe Vela, Ronnie Tovar, Roger Murray, Lolita Manacop, Grace Reyes, Sharon Henry, Jun Valino, Jon Dugan, Marie Madden, Gitanjali Spencer, George Callow, Norma Nelson, Ed Lamers, Mack Davis, Pat Beals, Michael Thompson, Marge Wolter, Melissa Williams, Mary Herrmann, Jim Ashworth, Mary Boon, Melva Cooke, Michelle Arguelles, John and Susan Logger, Bill and Helen Nuchols, Robert and Benita Roberts, Scott and DeAnn McWilliams, the family of Bill Ashworth





The Stars and Pipes Forever

By Robert Phillips



"Semiquincentennial" is a term that doesn't exactly roll off the tongue. The alternatives, including "quatermillennial" and "bisesquicentennial," aren't much of an improvement. But they all mean one thing: we will soon celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation, July 4, 1776, when delegates to the Second Continental Congress approved the final draft of the Declaration of Independence. Come to the FUMCOR sanctuary at 7 pm Saturday, July 11, to experience "The Stars and Pipes Forever," a concert of organ music written by notable Americans during the last two and one-half centuries (including Francis Hopkinson, one of the New Jersey delegates who signed the Declaration).

In the first half of the program, you'll hear a musical depiction of General George Washington's crossing the Delaware River and routing the hapless Hessians in the Battle of Trenton. You'll sample trumpet tunes, arias, voluntaries, variations, and other works by early Americans, some fresh off the boat and some born in the United States. Soprano Kris Lovekin will sing "When Winds Are Raging," based on a poem by Harriet Beecher Stowe that urges us to dwell in the Lord and seek the "peaceful stillness" that lies beneath "the babble of life's angry voices." Then you'll hear E. Power Biggs's arrangement of "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

The second half of the concert will present music from the 20th and 21st centuries in a wide variety of styles, including tributes to the Quakers, William Billings (early American choral composer), spirituals, shape-note hymns, ragtime, our 50th state, and the 1929 musical "Gold Diggers of Broadway." You'll hear heavy hitters such as Aaron Copland and Dave Brubeck. Saxophonist Jeff Benedict will perform the lyrical "Prayer of St. Ambrose," composed in 2003. Several pieces will celebrate the ideal of freedom, and the evening will conclude with Michael Burkhardt's spirited "Festival March," incorporating "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing."



The concert is free, and a free-will offering will be collected to support the Organ Dedicated Fund. A gracious donor has agreed to match all contributions, so your generosity will go twice as far in maintaining our magnificent pipe organ.



FUMPS Summer Camp is a Hit

Our First UMC Preschool (called FUMPS) held a summer session with 36 children, laughing and splashing through June! Our themes included Summer Splash, Pirates and Princesses, Creepy Crawlers and Freedom Fun. There was a lot of water play, fun snacks and great activities.

We are still enrolling for the fall! Please help get the word out, because we only have a few spots left. Our regular school year starts on Aug. 10. For more information, call (951) 683-4500.

Follow Fumps_preschool on Instagram for more pictures.



Watch out, sharks below!

Meet Crystal Foote, Church Office Manager



The Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to welcome Crystal Foote as our Church Office Manager and Treasurer, overseeing daily office operations, financial management, and administrative support for the church.

She has 15 years of experience in accounting, inventory, and staff management across several industries.

"I am passionate about serving others and helping ensure the church runs smoothly and efficiently," Crystal said.

Outside of work, she spends quality time with her four children, camping, off-roading, boating, fishing and creating lasting memories on the water.

"These activities help me stay grounded, strengthen family connections, and appreciate God's creation. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our church and support its mission through dedication, organization, and a heart for ministry."

Thanks to Steve Kerrick and all of the SPRC committee who interviewed many candidates before voting unanimously that Crystal was the one.

Are You a Bell Ringer?

The Bell Choir wrapped up the season with a spectacular concert that truly rang out in style! Our talented Allegro Ringers delighted the audience with a selection of familiar favorites, ending on a high note with a lively Tin Pan Alley medley. The result? A resounding success—literally and figuratively!

The bell choirs are taking a well-deserved summer break—but we'll be back in September, and we're looking for new members! Whether you're a seasoned musician or brand new to reading music, everyone is welcome. Gayla offers hands-on instruction in both music reading and bell ringing—so no experience is needed, just your enthusiasm and willingness to learn! Ready to make music and memories? Let me know if you're interested—we'd love to have you! - Gayla Lonsbery



Take Time Out for a Show

A new fellowship group is starting to see Riverside Community Players shows as a group. Buy tickets to the matinee on Saturdays, Sept. 19, Nov. 14, Feb. 13, May 1 and July 3. Choose section D to be close to others from church. Contact Teri Whieldon for details

Riverside Community Players
ANNOUNCING OUR 102ND SEASON

- Neil Simon's Laughter on the 23rd Floor**
 September 4-20, 2026
 AUDITIONS June 29 & 30, 2026
 Directed by Toni Lynd
- SWEENEY TODD**
 The DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET
 The MELODRAMA
 by Christopher Bond
 October 30-November 15, 2026
 AUDITIONS July 6 & 7, 2026
 Directed by Cindi East
- the Book of Will**
 January 29-February 14, 2027
 AUDITIONS November 8 & 9, 2026
 Directed by Vincent Washicko
- Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility**
 April 16-May 2, 2027
 AUDITIONS February 7 & 8, 2027
 Directed by David Gillett
- SOMETHING'S AFOOT**
 A Murder Mystery Musical Comedy!
 June 18-July 3, 2027
 AUDITIONS April 18 & 19, 2027
 Directed by Mia Mercado
- FAMILY SERIES**
- A CHRISTMAS CAROL**
 December 4-13, 2026
 AUDITIONS September 13 & 14, 2026
 Directed by Kayla Tate
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**
 March 4-7, 2027
 AUDITIONS December 6 & 7, 2026
 Directed by Michelle Cummins

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



Plan to eat together and raise money for missions on July 26 and Aug. 30. The Habit sends 20 percent of your bill back to the church

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

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

Rev. J.T. Kim, Senior Pastor
 pastorjtkim@firstchurchriverside.org

Christina Graves, Children and Youth
 childrensdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Crystal Foote, Office Manager
 officemanager@firstchurchriverside.org

Beverly Devine, Secretary
 secretary@firstchurchriverside.org

Yvonne Flagg, Choir Director
 choirdirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Gayla Lonsbery, Bell Director
 belldirector@firstchurchriverside.org

Robert Phillips, Organist
 organist@firstchurchriverside.org

Lisa Skiver, Preschool Director
 fumps@sbcglobal.net

Jesse Ruiz, Custodial Manager
 jruiz28880@aol.com

Brad Tomlinson, Campus Supervisor
 bradtomlinson4@yahoo.com

