



## From the Pastor's Heart

### *“The Mocked Prophet”*

It's a well-known fact that, in the Muslim world, insulting Muhammad, the founding prophet of Islam, will surely get one killed. I remember immediately after the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, published some cartoon caricatures of Muhammad back in 2006 (which caused violent reactions by angry mobs around the world), there were vigorous debates in the media either to support its right to free speech or to condemn its lack of discretion and sensitivity to Islam (but, without exception, all condemned the violent acts).

Of all the comments that I'd read at the time, one stood out from them all — because of its poignant depiction of a major difference between Muhammad and Christ — by the prolific Reformed Baptist writer and pastor, John Piper: The work of Muhammad is based on being honored and the work of Christ is based on being insulted. This produced two very different reactions to mockery (*WORLD Magazine*, February 18, 2006, Vol. 21, No. 7).

Piper wrote: “If Christ had not been insulted, there would be no salvation. This was His saving work: to be insulted and die to rescue sinners from the wrath of God.... That's the most basic difference between Christ and Muhammad and between a Muslim and a follower of Christ. For Christ, enduring the mockery of the cross was the essence of his mission.”

I believe Piper was trying to remind us that while Muslims around the world became indignant because they believed their revered prophet had been mocked and disrespected, Christians were supposed to imitate Christ and called to suffer for his sake — as Paul says, “For [God] has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well” (Philippians 1:29). And “If, in fact, we suffer with [Christ] so that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:17). But, do we?

Actually, in many respects, many Christians today have unknowingly bought into the same thinking as Muslims that we are only to honor and revere Christ and stop right there — while some liberal theologians are calling for a “bloodless” religion and condemn the orthodox Christian emphasis on the suffering and death of Christ on the cross; others are mesmerized by the so-called “health-and-wealth” or “name-it-and-claim-it” gospel, believing that once we believe in Christ, everything good will come our way!

In this Lenten season, when we once again remember the sacrificial suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, let us lift up the fact that “he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

When we do celebrate Christ's suffering and death then, as Piper concludes, “It means that a religion with no insulted Savior will not endure insults to win the scoffers. It means that Islam is destined to bear the impossible load of upholding the honor of one who did not die and rise again to make that possible. It means that Jesus Christ is still the only hope of peace with God and peace with man. And it means that his followers must be willing to ‘share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death’ (Philippians 3:10).”

May our Triune God grant us peace to know what it means to suffer with Christ, and go with us as we walk in His way this season, that we may come to know Him more fully. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

## Worship with Us!



IN-PERSON AND “LIVE” BROADCAST

SUNDAY WORSHIP @ 10:00am

[www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org](http://www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org)

Riverside Presbyterian Church

3400 N. Atlantic Avenue

Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

321-783-6085

Email: [office@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org](mailto:office@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org)





# Riverside CHP Collection

## January 25 - February 22

Riverside is helping CHP by serving 80+ children each week at 3 schools in Cocoa Beach and Merritt Island. We will be collecting items from Jan. 25 - Feb 22. Please join us as we begin collecting each Sunday for 5 weeks. Here is a list of what we need:

- Chef Boyardee single serve variety (pull top 7.25oz)
- Chocolate milk (Horizon 8 oz shelf stable)
- Goldfish crackers or whole grain pretzels (ie: Pepperidge Farm Goldfish 1.5 oz cheddar or .75 oz pretzel)
- Breakfast bars (Belvita or Zee Zee's)
- Graham crackers (Teddy Grahams or Zee Zee's Bars)
- Sunflower seeds (Zee Zee's nut free protein 1-1.2 oz package)
- Craisins (1oz box/1.16oz pouch)
- Applesauce (no sugar added 6 pk) in individual plastic containers
- Fruit cups in plastic individual containers – any variety
- 100% Apple or fruit/vegetable juice in individual boxes or pouches



**Join us to pack boxes on March 1st for Packing Day!**

## Gift Card Collection

Even though Cape View Elementary will be closing at the end of the 2026 school year, the children still need assistance for the remaining year.

We will be collecting gift cards in \$10 increments from Publix and Walmart.

You can put your gift cards in the offering plate, or drop them off at the church office. Thank you for your continued generosity!

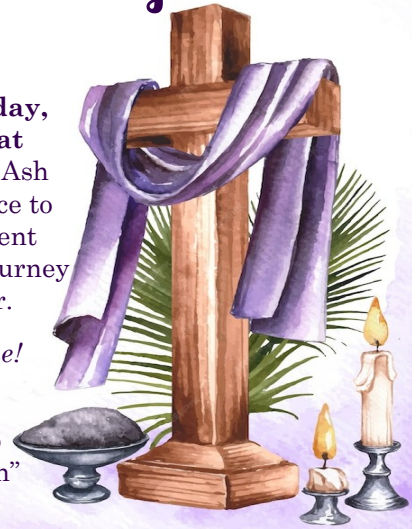


## Ash Wednesday Service

Join us **Wednesday, February 18, at 6:00 p.m.** for an Ash Wednesday Service to prepare us for Lent and to begin our journey toward Easter.

*All Are Welcome!*

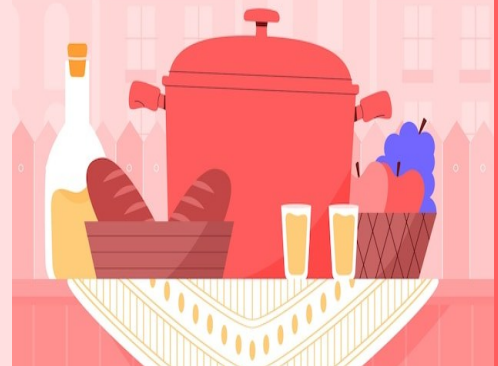
“You are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).



# Time & Talent Fair

Join us for our Time and Talent Fair immediately following worship on **Sunday, February 15**, in the Fellowship Hall. This special event is a great opportunity to enjoy fellowship, learn about the many ways to serve within our church, and share the gifts God has given you. Come hungry for soup, connection, and inspiration as we work together to strengthen our church community and serve others.

***We look forward to seeing you there!***



# Rock the Universe 2026

Rock the Universe 2026 was truly an unforgettable weekend of faith, fun, and fellowship for Riverside’s youth and young adults who attended on Friday, January 23, thanks to the generosity of Riverside. Universal Studios Orlando hosted one of the **largest Christian music festivals in the United States featuring artists such as Switchfoot and Forrest Frank**, bringing together thousands of believers for worship, community, and joy—and Riverside was blessed to be part of it.

Representing Riverside were a wonderful group of youth, young adults, and caring adult leaders that included **Maddie Pearson, Jordan Boggs, Natalie Roman, Ricky Roman, Robbie Ward, Riley Johnson, David Ward, Kathleen Turner, and Kyle Pearson**. Supporting and accompanying the youth were dedicated adult leaders **Meghan Johnson, Karen Ward, Sonia Pearson, Trish Boggs, and Emma Turner**.

**Riverside’s support made this trip possible in a meaningful way.** The church generously helped cover youth tickets and provided a 15-passenger van, allowing the entire group to travel together—building connection and community before the event even began. A special thank you goes to **Meghan Johnson** who served as the driver. It was a long but exciting adventure, beginning at 4:00 p.m. and concluding with a joyful (and very tired!) return to the church at 2:30 a.m. Many participants expressed how deeply grateful they were for the generosity, encouragement, and investment Riverside continues to make in young people. The impact of worshiping together, hearing testimonies through music, and sharing the experience as a church family will carry forward long after the final song.



*Thank you, Riverside, for believing in our youth and walking alongside them as they grow in faith. Your support matters—and it shows!*

## February Birthdays

Sonja Buckley	2/3
Jak Burton	2/3
Mick Ray	2/7
Anita Olton	2/13
Evelyn Whitehurst	2/20
Debbie Swanson	2/22
Elizabeth Deak	2/24
Edward Roldan	2/27
Charles Talbot	2/27
Pam Weiger	2/27

Wishing you all a Happy Birthday!!!

Dr., Vernon Boushell Concert Series Presents

## A German Requiem

Sunday, March 8, 2026, 3:30 p.m.

Tickets will be available online at [www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org](http://www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org) or will-call number 321-222-7875. An email will be sent early February once tickets are available to reserve.

RPC



## 1956–1966 | Rooted in a Growing Community

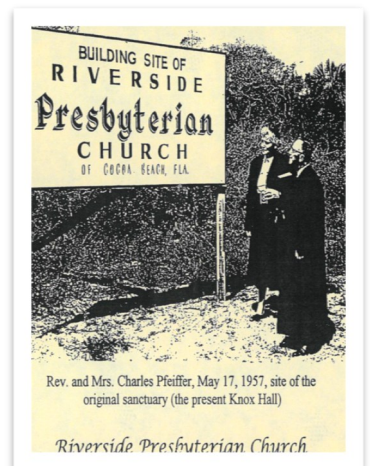
### Our Community

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Riverside Presbyterian Church was born alongside the rapid growth of Cocoa Beach during the dawn of the Space Age. The city transformed quickly: the Starlite Motel opened in 1956 as the first motel, Cape Canaveral Hospital construction began in 1957, schools opened to serve a booming population, and businesses followed as families poured into the area. The excitement of the Space Race defined the era. On May 6, 1961, crowds gathered to witness Alan Shepard's historic Freedom 7 launch, followed in 1962 by more than 75,000 people watching John Glenn orbit the Earth aboard Friendship 7. Longtime member Rusty Fischer recalled businesses throughout Brevard County hanging banners wishing "God Speed" to the astronauts. It was a time of shared hope, energy, and faith in the future—an environment in which Riverside took root.



### Our Church

Riverside Presbyterian Church unofficially began on January 23, 1956, when 18 women met at the home of Helen Trabue to form Women's Circle #8 of Rockledge Presbyterian Church. They soon learned of plans to establish a new church in Cocoa Beach and committed to supporting that mission. Rev. Charles W. Pfeiffer led the first worship service on April 29, 1956, at St. David's Episcopal Church. Regular worship began June 3, and by July the congregation voted to purchase land on A-1-A for \$16,000. On October 7, 1956, Riverside Presbyterian Church was formally organized with 78 charter members. Groundbreaking for Knox Hall took place in March 1957, with the first service held there that June. Rev. Pfeiffer was installed as pastor in 1960 and served until 1964. During this decade, Riverside grew steadily—launching the *Down By the Riverside* newsletter, approving plans for a new sanctuary, and celebrating the first worship service in that space on Palm Sunday 1964. By then, membership had grown to 307. In 1965, the first Board of Deacons was established, strengthening the church's ministry and leadership.




### Our People

Joe Morgan was ordained as a deacon at Riverside, Joe also served as Mayor of Cocoa Beach and Chairman of the Brevard County Historical Commission. He exemplified Riverside's deep connection to the community. Arriving in Cocoa Beach in 1960, he describes the early days: "In the early 60s we had lots of children here in Cocoa Beach. All our churches were packed with children. The first doctor came to Cocoa Beach in the late '50s, Dr. Joe Von Thron. Where you go into Slow & Low now, that was his office. Around that time, I met Gus Edwards. Cocoa Beach was incorporated in 1925, and Gus was the first Mayor. At the time I met him, I think he was in his early 80s. He came down to give the Presbyterian Church \$1000." Joe's memorial service was held at Riverside in 2013, a fitting tribute to a life of service. From these early years, Riverside Presbyterian Church became a place of worship, learning, and serving community—faithfully planted and growing alongside Cocoa Beach.



# RIVERSIDE MISSION STUDY UPDATE


During the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 25, Mick Ray gave an update of the Mission Study Team progress. They are expecting to complete the Mission Study by the end of February and submit in preparation for the congregational approval of a Pastor Nominating Committee. Please see flow chart below.

**Head of household age** 

51-65

193 | 52.5%


~ Average local age is growing from 58 years to 61 years old by 2030

**Est. Household income** 

\$125,000-\$149,999

140 | 14.0%

~ Greater income than the state average

**Type of property** 

Multi-family: 101+ units

636 | 8.8%

~ Year-long population: 34,000  
~ Seasonal Population (weeks - months): 60,000

## Mission Study: Purpose & Use

- Explores Church Strategic Plan:
  - ~ Current State
  - ~ Future Needs
  - ~ Congregational Input
- Provides input regarding the pastor characteristics needed
- Assists Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to fill out the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) "vacancy announcement"

### Mission Study Team:

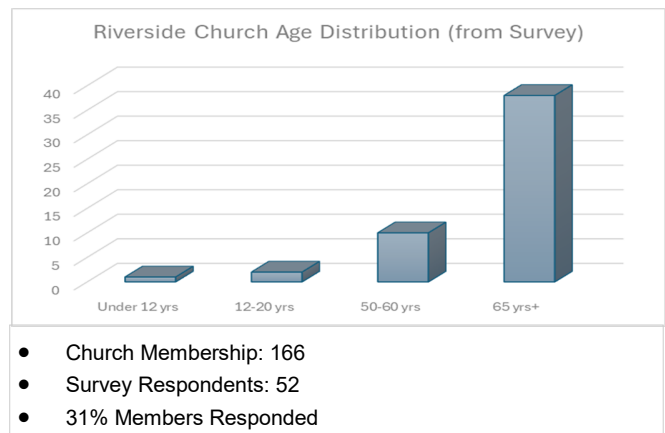
- Mick Ray, *Leader*
- David Johnson
- Chili Lindsay
- Nelson McCray
- Ann Stone
- Fern Wolle

## Local Population Features

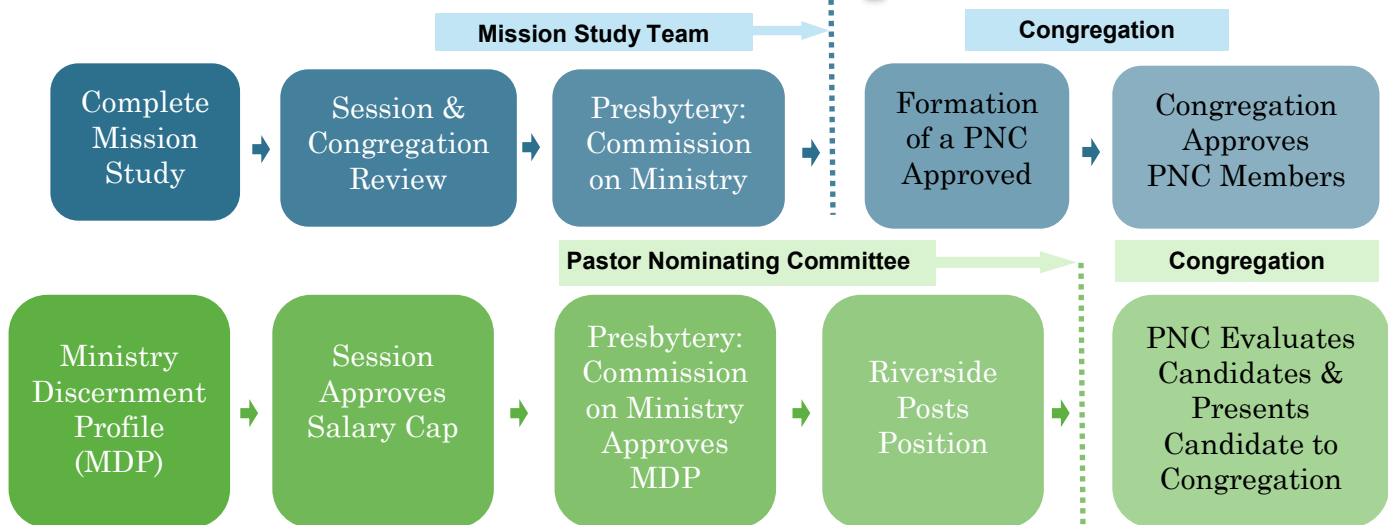
**Key Features**

- Empty-nesters
- Highly educated
- City dwellers
- Environmental advocates
- Well-traveled 14000
- Fitness minded 12000

## Congregation 2026 Survey - Age



# Next Steps





# Missions



Located near DeLand, Duvall Homes provides residential care and services for people with developmental disabilities with a goal to provide the highest quality of life and greatest level of independence for each resident.

Residents thrive in a family environment, both in the group homes and at day training where the number one priority is to empower them to become as independent in their lives as possible.

The Missions Team opted to support this needful ministry with funds from the Special Endowment Fund.

## Special Gathering

Special Gathering is dedicated to sharing the good news within the mentally-challenged community in Brevard County. Chapels are held in several locations: Merritt Island, Titusville, Melbourne, and Vero. They meet on Sundays, allowing a respite time for families to be able to attend the worship services of their choice. For many, this chapel time becomes their church.

Besides the chapel services, Special Gathering helps mentally challenged persons and their families advocate for themselves and helps them know what options are available to them. They also provide fellowship opportunities with an annual camp, field trips, and socials. Other activities include an annual Christmas play, a choir, and a newsletter written by and for their clients. Riverside continues to support this group with a donation from the Special Endowment Fund.



Matthew's Hope, located in Cocoa, fosters the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the homeless men, women, and children of our community by meeting basic needs, developing skills, and restoring dignity and independence. The ministry believes in offering a hand up, not just a hand out.

They do not take a traditional approach to serve needs within the community. Their overall goal is to be an organization that helps the homeless to grow emotionally, mentally, spiritually, physically, and vocationally. By building relationships and providing access to services and education, they create an environment where every guest, regardless of ability, can grow and succeed in their own way.

Matthew's Hope is not an emergency shelter nor is it a soup kitchen—they do have a food pantry and donated meals are served to all guests on outreach days with a mobile ministry that also works to meet the basic needs of the “structurally challenged” by helping with laundry, hygiene items, and clothing, as well as help with medical issues and needs. Also on the Cocoa campus is a preschool, a hair and nail salon, and Matthew's Hope Chest Workshop, a work opportunity.

Riverside has helped in the past by donating to them the lighter weight jackets found in our winter coat collections. The Missions Team is pleased to announce that we are financially supporting this organization with funds from the Special Endowment Fund.



This year’s Presbyterian Women’s study book is entitled, *“Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ.”*

Both circles meet in Knox Parlor:

Hannah/Ruth/Rebecca meets **the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 1:00 p.m.**

Deborah meets **the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 2:00 p.m.**

*If you are interested in joining one of the circles, please contact **Gail Marshall, Betty Peterson or Paula Yost.***



The Wednesday Afternoon Ladies’ Bible Study is using *“Ten Commandments from the Back Side”* by J. Ellsworth Kalas and discussing different ways to look at the Ten Commandments. We meet **Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m.** in Knox Parlor (also available via Zoom).

Contact **Paula Yost** for more information if you would like to join us Wednesday afternoons.

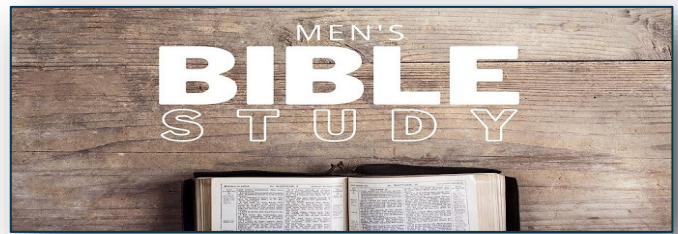


We come together each **Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m.** to pray for the needs of our church family and friends. There are blue cards in the pews that you can fill out, or you can email me at [biddle310@gmail.com](mailto:biddle310@gmail.com)

*Jana Lovett*

*Pray with Us For...*

- Loved ones
- Those who have illness or loss
- Our military personnel
- Our missionaries
- Our nation
- Our church



Men’s Bible Study meets Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. in-person in Knox Parlor and via Zoom. Afterwards we go to breakfast for more fellowship time.

If you prefer to join us via Zoom, please contact **Tom White** at 614-849-8741 or via email at [didymus623@gmail.com](mailto:didymus623@gmail.com) for a Zoom meeting invitation.

*Gentlemen, if you are not already a participant, we invite you to join us!*

**Sunday School**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**K-5th grade**

**Fusion Youth**  
Pfeiffer Room

**Adults**  
*The Holy Spirit, the Forgotten God*  
Knox Parlor

*Romans*  
(Ladies class)  
Knox Galilee

**Learn More About  
the God We Serve!**

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
and the greatest of these is love.”

~ I Corinthians 13:13 ~



### 2025 Financial (as of December 31)

Income	\$369,943
Operating Expenses	\$388,833
Net Income	\$ (18,890)

# Faithful Stewardship

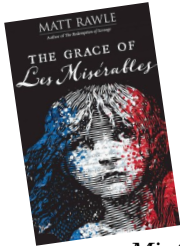
Thank you for your continued financial support!

God's work never stops...and therefore, neither does ours, blessings!

*Douglas Kasimier* , Treasurer, (dkasimier@aol.com)



## The Grace of Les Misérables



Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* is a truly epic story. Whether you've tackled the 1,400-page 19th century novel, witnessed the Broadway musical (and memorized its soundtrack), or seen the several screen adaptations of it, you already know the power of its story.

In the six-week study *The Grace of Les Misérables*, author and pastor **Matt Rawle** dives into six ideals found in the story—grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love, and hope—each represented by a character in Hugo's story. As these imperfect and relatable characters interact, we can see how these ideals work together (perhaps even in spite of each other) out in the world.

In keeping with his previous works, Matt Rawle brings us to the intersection of Church and Pop Culture by drawing parallels between the iconic story and musical and our Christian calling, inspiring us to both understand our faith and live it out in the world.

**February 23–March 30**  
Six Mondays at 1:00 p.m. (Knox Hall)

## Church Staff

**Rev. Dr. Bill Teng**  
*Interim Pastor*

**Rev. Jane Wesson**  
*Parish Associate*

**Betsie Germann**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Diana Amtower**  
*Traditional Music Leader*

**Keaton Belliveau**  
*Psalms 66 Praise Band Leader*

**Doug Kasimier**  
*Treasurer*

**Chuck Torgler**  
*Custodian*

**Karen Ward**  
*Web/IT/AV*

## Deacon Update

Deacons met in-person on January 13, Pastor Jane Wesson opened with prayer.

We welcomed our new Deacons: Martha Williams and Bob Yost.

Caring Person for February: Janice Eastes

Discussion was led by Pastor Jane in regards to Communion for Sunday morning worship and how to serve Communion to shut-ins and those who may be hospitalized.

Officers for the year 2026 were elected:

Moderator: Janice Eastes  
Vice Moderator: Fern Wolle  
Secretary: Martha Williams  
Treasurer: Jorge Castillo

Pastor Jane closed the meeting in prayer.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 10 at 6:00 p.m.

## Church Officers

### SESSION

Terri Beeler '26	Meghan Johnson '27
Anda Ray '26	Robert Howard '27
Ann Stone '26	Paula Yost '27
Carl Plaughter '26	Girard Middleton '28
Tom White '26	

### DIACONATE

Janice Eastes '26	Martha Williams '28
Carolyn Hattaway '26	Fern Wolle '28
Tammy Ivan '26	Bob Yost '28
Jorge Castillo '27	

**\$25 REGISTRATION**

All proceeds go to  
The Children's Hunger Project

**ALL YEARS, MAKES  
& MODELS**



**Third Annual**

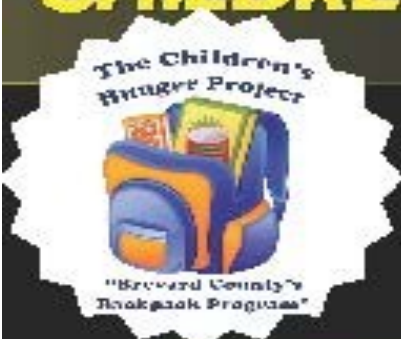
*Hosted by Space Coast Mopars  
& Riverside Presbyterian*

# CHILDREN'S HUNGER PROJECT

**When:**

February 28th, 2026  
10a- 2p

# CAR SHOW



**Where:**

Riverside Presbyterian  
3400 N. Atlantic Ave  
Cocoa Beach 32931

**Cash & Food**

**Donations Accepted**



**Awards**

**Food Trucks**

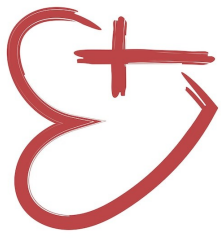
**Raffles & 50/50**

**DJ & Yard Games**

*Visit:*

*[thechildrenhungerproject.org/food-donations](http://thechildrenhungerproject.org/food-donations)*

*For preferred food items*



# February

# 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship (Communion) 11:15a Fellowship Time 11:15a Communications Team	2 1p Pastor's Class 7p NA Meeting	3 6p First Tuesday Dinner	4 8:30a Men's Study 9:30a Stitchin' Sisters 10a Prayer Circle 10a Care & Support 3p Women's Study	5 7p Choir Rehearsal	6	7
8 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11:15a Fellowship Time 11:15a Worship Team 3:30p In Love with Love Concert	9 No Pastor's Class 7p NA Meeting	10 6p Diaconate Meeting	11 8:30a Men's Study 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study	12 7p Choir Rehearsal 7p Christian Education Team	13	14 Valentine's Day
15 Transfiguration of the Lord 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11:15a Time & Talent Fair	16 Presidents Day 1p Bible Study 7p NA Meeting	17 1p HRR Circle 6p Session Meeting	18 <b>Ash Wednesday</b> 8:30a Men's Study 9:30a Stitchin' Sisters 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study 6p Ash Wednesday Service	19	20	21 3p Meme Pearson Memorial Service
22 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11:15a Fellowship Time	23 1p Lenten Bible Study 6:30p Community Engagement Team 7p NA Meeting	24 7p Missions Meeting	25 8:30a Men's Study 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study	26 7p Choir Rehearsal	27	28 10a Charity Car Show