



“Lent: Giving Up/Taking On”

Our traditional understanding of Lent is that we are to “give up” something as a kind of penance — a kind of self-denial — a test of pious discipline. However, instead of doing it as a private spiritual commitment between God and us, we have a tendency to want to parade or wear our “Lenten vow” as a crown of vainglory. Much like some people who wear the mark of ashes on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday as a mark of self-piety instead of humility and penitence.

Case and point: There was this bishop who liked to play golf. He loved the game. In fact, he carried his clubs around in the trunk of his car, ready to tee off at the first opportunity.

One spring he decided to give up playing golf during Lent (he obviously lived in the South!) and he told his diocese his intention in a sermon as an example of self-denial. Everything was fine for the first week. But then one morning, he was driving by a golf course on a beautiful day. He couldn't resist the temptation. He said to himself, “I think I'll just hit a few practice balls to keep my game in shape. It isn't really the same as playing, because I'll be by myself.” So he parked his car and started playing on about the fourth hole. The next thing he knew, he was going the whole route, playing by himself.

He didn't know it, but he was being observed. An angel up in heaven was watching him. Finally the angel went to St. Peter and said, “St. Peter, look down there. There's the bishop. He's breaking his vow for Lent. He should be punished.” St. Peter said, “You're right. We should teach him a lesson.” And the angel said, “What do you want me to do? Strike him dead with lightning?” “No,” said St. Peter. “I have a better idea. Watch me. I'll punish him.”

At that moment the bishop was on the sixth tee. This was a 450-yard dog leg. The bishop took a might cut at the ball and away it went up, up, over the trees, straight for the pin. He did it! A hole-in-one! The angel said to St. Peter, “Look at that. A 450-yard hole-in-one. Do you call that punishment?” “Yes,” said St. Peter. “For a golfer that is the worst punishment possible. He just hit one of the greatest shots in golf history and he can't tell anybody about it.”


It goes to show that very often something that is meant to be a spiritual exercise can very easily be turned into external religiosity. All of us have a tendency to spin a web and wind up trapping ourselves in it. Even though the idea of giving up something dear and enjoyable to us during Lent may be a good spiritual discipline, maybe we should consider a different approach this year — by taking on something. Something that would enhance our relationships with God and one another, and help us prepare for the realities made present at Easter — a faith community that is centered around the risen Christ and the unfolding of Christian life and ministry.

Instead of giving up sweets, how about taking on spending an extra five minutes in our daily devotion? Instead of resisting to buy expensive gadgets, how about taking on attending a Sunday class or Bible study group? Instead of refraining from going out to eat, how about taking on praying for and with one another? Better yet, why don't we do both? Both giving up quietly and taking on boldly? It's never too late to do that!

May God grant you pardon and peace, and go with you as you walk in the way of Christ in this season, that you may come to know Him more fully!

Pastor Bob

Worship with Us!

 IN-PERSON AND “LIVE” BROADCAST
SUNDAY WORSHIP @ 10:00am
www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org



3400 N. Atlantic Avenue
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931
321-783-6085

Email: office@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org

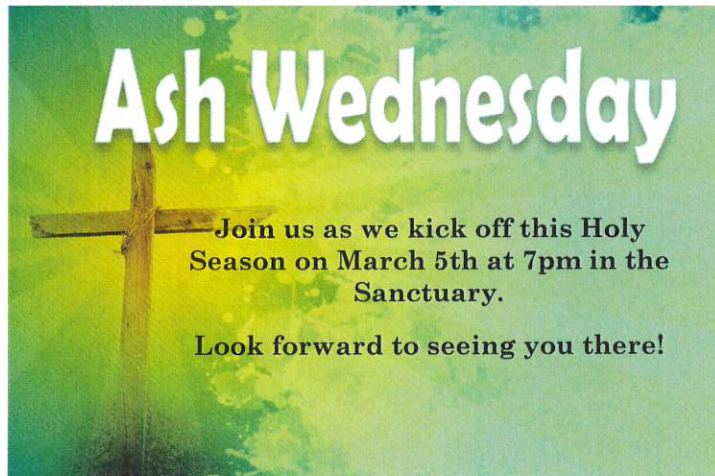


Our next First Tuesday Dinner will be Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. Our dinner will be catered by Brano's Italian Grill, and the menu will be Chicken Piccata, pasta, green bean casserole, garden salad, bread and dessert. Cost is \$12.00 per person.

Following dinner our program will be presented by our own Becky Carson, as she shows pictures she took on her recent trip to Hawaii. She and her family were staying in Hawaii when Kilauea volcano erupted.

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors. Sign up after church in Fellowship Hall, phone the church secretary, or phone Betty Peterson at 406-750-9202.

Reservations for the dinner must be made by noon on Sunday, March 2nd.



Ash Wednesday

Join us as we kick off this Holy Season on March 5th at 7pm in the Sanctuary.

Look forward to seeing you there!



DON'T FORGET...

Spring FORWARD

Sunday, March 9, 2025

March Birthdays

Beverly Abrams	3/1
Zoltan Deak	3/6
Anny Rybicki	3/9
Linda Harris	3/13
Barbara Cox	3/14
JB Olds	3/17
Bev Kasimier	3/19
Margaret	
Hough-Fjeldheim	3/20
Sue Colley	3/27
Kathy Coon	3/29

Photographer Wanted

We are looking for a talented photographer! We would like to have pictures of our stained-glass windows taken on-level (from a ladder), while the sun is brightly shining through them. Are you a photography hobbyist, amateur, or professional willing to share your talent with Riverside? Please contact the church office if you're able to help.

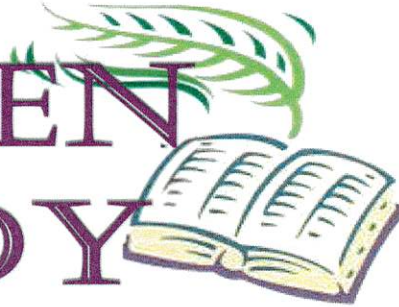


Pictures Needed

We are a very busy church family, and we want to capture every moment! Do you have pictures from a Bible study, event, gathering, or just fellowship with other Riverside members and visitors? We would love to showcase them on our TVs in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall, as well as our website and social media platforms. You can send your pictures to Meghan Johnson (schenma1@gmail.com), Bob Howard (howb67@gmail.com) or the church office. We can't wait to see what our church family has been up to!



LENTEN STUDY



Beginning on **Wednesday, March 12** (starting at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall with light supper and ending at 7:30), Pastor Bill Teng will lead a five-week video Lenten study on *“He Chose the Nails: What God Did to Win Your Heart”* by Max Lucado.

Is your heart unsettled by the chaos of the world? Are you heavy-laden with bad moments, mad moments, or anxious moments? This Lent, you may learn to rest in God’s self-giving love and leave all your troubles at the foot of the cross.

There were no accidents on the days surrounding Jesus’ death. Jesus’ last moments were not left up to chance. God chose the path; he selected the nails. Our Lord planted the trio of crosses and painted the sign. God was never more sovereign than in the details of the death of his Son. Of course God didn’t have to do all these things. The only required act for our salvation was the shedding of blood, yet he did much more. So much more.

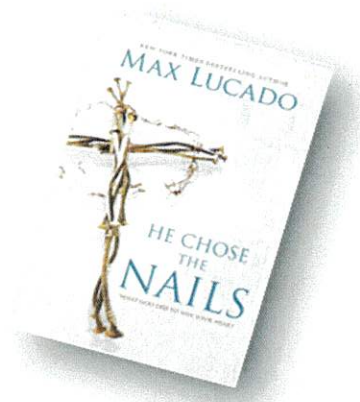
In *He Chose the Nails*, New York Times bestselling author and pastor Max Lucado will help you:

- Learn just how much God loves and cares for you.
- Take comfort that Jesus understands everything you face in this life.
- Remember that there’s nothing you can do to earn God’s gift.
- Stand firm in the promise that you are forgiven, and you are welcome in God’s presence.

Search the scene of the cross and listen for God’s gentle whisper, “I did it just for you.”

These lessons include: *“He Chose to Be One of Us,” “He Chose to Forgive Us,” “He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence,” “He Chose to Love Us Forever,”* and *“He Chose to Give Us Victory.”* A popular writer and preacher, named “America’s Pastor” by *Christianity Today* magazine, and in 2005 named by *Reader’s Digest* as “The Best Preacher in America,” Max Lucado has written almost 100 books with 130 million copies in print.

All are welcome!



Lenten Meals

Before our Lenten study we are offering a light meal at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.

There are two options for meals: Meal Deal - \$30 for all 5 meals or \$7 at the door.

If you would like to help with meals there are opportunities
to help with cooking, set up or clean up.

On Calling a Pastor

Riverside Presbyterian Church has been in transition, and naturally people are wondering how long is this transition period going to be until the next called pastor arrives?

According to our presbytery polity, there are still a few more steps that Session would need to take before a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) could do the work of identifying potential candidates:

1. The Session would first need to appoint a team to prepare a Mission Study (or a Self-Study), which is a process of congregational examination and envisioning that a congregation goes through to seek discernment about how God would have that church to be and to act in the future — this process would engage the entire congregation in small groups to survey what their vision is for the future of Riverside;
2. This process would result in a Mission Study Report being written that would be presented to the Session for approval and to the Committee on Ministry (COM) for review, after which it will be available to the congregation;
3. Upon COM's approval, it would then grant Session permission to have the congregation elect a PNC, based on the nomination from the congregational Nominating Committee (NC);
4. The PNC would then prepare the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP), based on The Mission Study Report, used to inform potential candidates on the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website — this would again need to be reviewed and approved by both Session and COM;
5. Once clearance is received, the PNC would then go to work to identify potential candidates for our next called pastor.

Needless to say, this is a very deliberate, thoughtful, and prayerful process which will take some time to accomplish. A typical search process would last anywhere between 18 to 24 months, and should not be rushed. To quote from *On Calling a Pastor: A Manual for Churches Seeking Pastors*, published by the PC(USA), “You are about to begin a journey that those who have gone before you have described as exciting, tedious, joyful, spiritual, frustrating, inspiring, lengthy, and powerful (just to name a few.) While your journey may feel more like a roller coaster ride than a lovely stroll through the park, the destination is certain: calling a new pastor who will serve your congregation.” The Session's hope is to have a PNC in place sometime late in 2025 to begin receiving and reviewing candidates. Your continuing prayers are much needed and appreciated!

Worship on Demand

Did you know that you can worship on demand with Riverside? We live stream our services each Sunday on our website and Facebook, but then upload a recording of our service to our YouTube channel. That means you can view it whenever it's convenient for you. Missed us on Sunday?... no problem!

Visit <https://bit.ly/RPConDemand> to see all of our recorded services.

“Nearly Diamond” Shines at Riverside’s Free Concert Series!

On Sunday, February 16, the Dr. Vernon Boushell Concert Series once again brought music lovers together for an unforgettable evening. A packed house of nearly 500 attendees enjoyed *Nearly Diamond: The Sensational Neil Diamond Tribute Show*, starring Johnathan Elgart. For two hours, the audience sang along—and even danced—to beloved hits like *Cracklin’ Rosie*, *Forever in Blue Jeans*, and *Kentucky Woman*.



A special highlight of the evening was the offering selection, Billy Joel’s *Just The Way You Are*, a heartfelt reminder of how our heavenly Father embraces us exactly as we are.

The generosity of the community shone just as brightly as the music. Donations exceeded \$2,500, and thanks to the support of “Friends of the Boushell Concert Series” contributors, most of the event’s expenses were covered. This free concert series, now in its 17th year, continues to be a remarkable gift from Riverside to the community—welcoming all with no charge, sustained entirely by voluntary donations.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the many volunteers who made this event possible—ushers, greeters, ticket verifiers, parking attendants, performers, technical teams, stage and logistics crews, financial supporters, and, of course, the Executive Producer.



Your dedication ensures that this beloved concert series continues to bring joy and inspiration to our community. Thank you!



MISSION



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING SPECIAL OFFERINGS HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

For more than 75 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world.

In a world of disaster, hunger and oppression, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing— Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People— all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need, from initial disaster response to ongoing community development. Their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance and hope by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, providing food to the hungry and resourcing communities working to cast off the bonds of poverty and oppression.

Join with Presbyterians worldwide in sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed.

To learn more about how your gift to One Great Hour of Sharing makes a difference, visit pcusa.org/oghs.com



Ways to Give:

- Use the special Offering envelope
- Include with your regular offering—write OGSH on your offering envelope
- Donate online (www.RiversidePresbyterianChurch.org) (note OGHS in comment box)



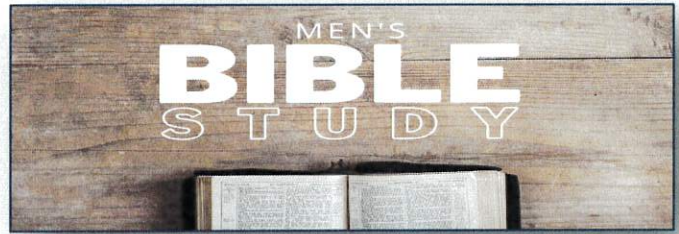
Presbyterian Women

This year the Presbyterian Women are looking at God's call to care for our neighbors and for creation with a study entitled "Let Justice Roll Down." If you are interested in joining one of the circles, please contact Gail Marshall, Betty Peterson or Paula Yost.

Both circles meet in Knox Parlor.

Hannah/Ruth/Rebecca meets the 3rd Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Deborah meets the 3rd Wednesday at 2 p.m.



Men's Bible Study meets Wednesday's at 8:30am 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 for a Zoom meeting invitation.



The Wednesday night Ladies' Bible Study moved to Wednesday afternoons at 2 pm in Knox Parlor. (also available via Zoom)

We are enjoying "Old Testament Stories from the Back Side" by J. Ellsworth Kalas. Contact Paula Yost for more information if you would like join us Wednesday afternoons.

Sunday School 9am

K-5th grade/Fusion Youth

Adults

A study of the doctrine of The Trinity
Knox Parlor

Essentials of Faith: Why Do We Need the Bible?
(Ladies class)
Knox Galilee

PRAYER Circle

We come together each Wednesday morning at 10am 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

Jane Lovett

Pray with Us For...

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

2025 Sanctuary Flowers

If you would like to provide flowers for the Sanctuary, the sign up sheet is in the Narthex.



After the flowers are enjoyed on Sunday morning, you have the option taking them home or the Deacons can deliver them to those who can no longer join us on Sundays.

The cost remains \$35.00.



2025 Financial (as of January 31st)

Income	\$30,307
Operating Expenses	23,751
Net Income	\$6,556

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)

Session Update

Deacon Update

The Session met in-person on February 18, 2024.
The Rev. Dr. Bill Teng moderated.

The positions for Elder have been filled. Class of 2027:
Paula Yost, Bob Howard, Meghan Johnson.
Class of 2026: Ann Stone, Anda Ray, Teri Beeler.
Class of 2025: Carl Plaughter, Tom White, Mark Gordon.

The Easter Sunrise Service is on April 20, at Sidney Fischer Park on the beach. Pastor Bill will preach and Keaton Belliveau will lead the music.

Pastor Bill will lead a 5-week Wednesday evening Lenten Series starting March 12 at 6 pm with a light dinner in Fellowship Hall followed by a study by Max Lucado, "He Chose the Nails".

Pastor Bill requested that the Session meetings be held on the 3rd MONDAY of the month at 7 pm in Knox Parlor.

The Deacons met in-person on February 11th.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11th at 7pm.

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Bill Teng
Interim Pastor

Betsie Germann
Administrative Assistant

Diana Amtower
Traditional Music Leader

Keaton Belliveau
Psalm 66 Praise Band Leader

Doug Kasimier
Treasurer

Chuck Torgler
Custodian

Karen Ward
Web/IT/AV

Church Officers

SESSION

Carl Plaughter '25	Ann Stone '26
Tom White '25	Meghan Johnson '26
Anda Ray '26	Paula Yost '27
Mark Gordon '26	Robert Howard '27
Teri Beeler '26	

DEACONS

Lindalee Torgler '25	Janice Eastes '26
Susan White '25	Tammy Ivan '26
Fern Wolle '25	Jorge Castillo '27
Carolyn Hattaway '26	



MARCH

2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9am Youth & Adult SS 10am Worship 11am Fellowship Time 11am Communications	3 1pm Disciple Study 7pm NA Meeting	4 6pm First Tuesday Dinner	5 8:30am Men's Study 9:30am Stitches' Sisters 10am Care & Support 10am Prayer Circle 2pm Women's Study 7pm Ash Wednesday	6 7pm Choir Rehearsal	7	1 8
9 Spring Forward! 9am Youth & Adult SS 10am Worship 11am Fellowship Time 11am Worship & Sacrament	10 1pm Disciple Study 7pm NA Meeting	11 7pm Deacons Meeting	12 8:30am Men's Study 10am Prayer Circle 2pm Women's Study 6pm Lenten Meal 6:45pm Lenten Study	13 7pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Christian Education	14	15
16 9am Youth & Adult SS 10am Worship 11am Fellowship Time	17 1pm Disciple Study 7pm NA Meeting	18 1pm HRR Circle 7pm Session Meeting	19 8:30am Men's Study 9:30am Stitches' Sisters 10am Prayer Circle 2pm Women's Study 6pm Lenten Meal 6:45pm Lenten Study	20 7pm Choir Rehearsal	21	22
23 9am Youth & Adult SS 10am Worship 11am Fellowship Time	24 1pm Disciple Study 7pm NA Meeting	25 7pm Missions Meeting	26 8:30am Men's Study 10am Prayer Circle 2pm Women's Study 6pm Lenten Meal 6:45pm Lenten Study	27 7pm Choir Rehearsal	28	29
30 9am Youth & Adult SS 10am Worship 11am Fellowship Time 3:30pm Oratorio Concert	31 1pm Disciple Study 7pm NA Meeting					