



December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent



3400 North Atlantic Avenue
Cocoa Beach, Florida 32931
321-783-6085

www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org

On behalf of Riverside Presbyterian, it is our pleasure to welcome you to worship this morning. The opportunity to worship together as the Family is one of God's greatest gifts. It is our hope that this time and place will be a grounding place for us all, one that enables us to live as freely and fully as God intends.



STEWARDSHIP

To support the ministry of Riverside Presbyterian Church, contributions may be sent to the church office or you may pledge electronically at www.riversidepresbyterianchurch.org or scan the QR code on the left to give through tithely.com.

Do you want to get a head start in preparing for Sunday worship? The Sunday worship bulletin is now being linked in the Friday e-mail, together with the livestreaming web link, which are also posted on the church's website: riversidepresbyterianchurch.org. The worship service is livestreamed and is available on the church's website: <https://www.youtube.com/@riversidepresbyterianchurch8946>. Please spread the word to those who are interested in worshipping with us online.

The term "voluntary" is used to denote a piece of music or improvisation for instrument, played before, during, or at the end of a church service.

The season of **Advent** is a corporate spiritual journey that calls for expectant waiting and readiness for the coming of Christ. It is hoped that when the church travels this journey and treats it as a discipline of life and prayer, the joy of Christmas is immeasurably intensified. The color purple or blue is used for Advent as it is expressive of hope (expectation, anticipation), which is again the dominant mood of Advent.

SESSION

Class of 2025

Carl Plaugher
Tom White
Debbie Burleigh, *Clerk*

Class of 2026

Teri Beeler
Anda Ray
Ann Stone

Class of 2027

Bob Howard
Meghan Johnson
Paula Yost

DIACONATE

Class of 2025

Susan White
Fern Wolle

Class of 2026

Janice Eastes
Carolyn Hattaway
Tammy Ivan

Class of 2027

Jorge Castillo

The December/January issue of our newsletter *Down by the Riverside* has been sent out by email. If you wish to have a hard copy, it is available in the church office and the narthex. If you're interested in receiving our electronic monthly newsletter (except for January and July), please leave your e-mail address. If you wish to receive a hard copy by mail, please call the church office at 321-783-6085.

Lectionary Readings for Today (Year A):

Isaiah 7:10-16; *Psalms* 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

✦ Standing for those who are able

People's response in ***bold & italic*** type

APPROACHING THE THRONE OF GRACE

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP: *"She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us'" (Matthew 1:21-23).*

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

GREETINGS & CONGREGATIONAL LIFE SHARED

Pastor Bill Teng

The Lord be with you. ***And also with you . . .***

... The grace and peace of the Lord be with you. ***And also with you.***

VOLUNTARY

“Angels”

Jim Brickman (1997)

Diana Amtower, *Piano*

✠ LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Joe & Jen Fanning

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

“Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard” (Isaiah 58:8).

Come, Lord Jesus, our light and life.

Until that day, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

⦿ HYMN #105

“People, Look East”

BESANÇON

✠ PRAYER OF ADORATION

STIRRING OF THE SPIRIT

“One Thing Remains”

Jesus Culture (2012)

“Reckless Love”

Corey Asbury (2017)

Psalm 66 Praise Band / Keaton Belliveau, *Leader*

MAKING OUR CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Lord in whom we trust: We confess our fears have often caused us to choose paths that lead us away from your promises. You have come to make your home in us, sending your Son to be Immanuel — God with us, God for us. Still, we turn away in fear.

Forgive our resistance to your habitation among us. Soften our resistance by your Holy Spirit, that we will welcome your holy presence — living in its light joyously, witnessing faithfully to the hope it brings — until the day when every eye will see, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to your everlasting glory .

SILENT REFLECTION (*Reflecting on the Prayer of Confession*)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

... Friends, believe the Good News. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God. Amen.

... The Peace of Christ be with you. ***And also with you.***

TIME FOR CHILDREN & FUSION YOUTH

Elder Anda Ray

CALL TO OFFERING

Pastor Teng

OFFERTORY

“Advent Lullaby”

Mark Burrows (2025)

Chancel Choir / Diana Amtower, *Director*

✦ DOXOLOGY #606

OLD HUNDREDTH

✠ PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING — Isaiah 7:10-16 (Old Testament, p. 636)

Elder Paula Yost

The Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

✠HYMN #123 (vv. 1-2, 5)

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

CAROL

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING — Matthew 1:18-25 (New Testament, p. 1)

Pastor Teng

The Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

SERMON

“Surprised by Joy: God Is NOWHERE!”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

... Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

... Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

⊕ **HYMN #104**

“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

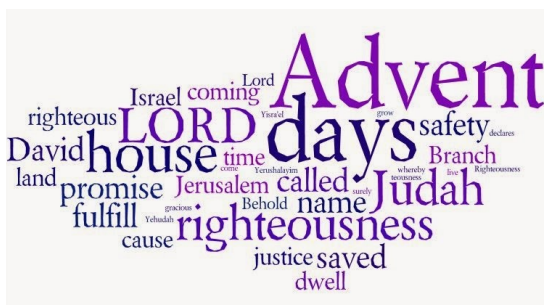
⚔ CHARGE AND BLESSING

✦ SENDING SONG

“Happy Day”

Jesus Culture (2008)

Psalm 66 Praise Band / Keaton Belliveau, *Leader*





“Blessed by God to be a Blessing”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3).

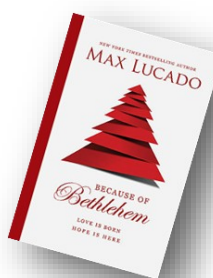
Thanks to your faithfulness, as of December 7, we have received a total of **56 Faith Promises** towards 2026, for a total of **\$276,300**.

If you have yet to return your **Faith Promise Card**, indicating how much you wish to give back to the Lord in 2026, please feel free to put it in the offering plate, or mail it to the office.

Celebrating Riverside’s 70th Year of Ministry in 2026

Calling all planners, storytellers, and do-ers! We’re forming a 70th Anniversary Planning Team to coordinate with our existing ministries, weave celebrations into church life, and spark a few new, future-focused opportunities. If you love organizing events, sharing ideas, or just lending a helpful hand, we’d love to have you. Contact **Anda Ray** at andaray77@gmail.com.





Advent Study — The last class of the Advent study on **“Because of Bethlehem”** by Max Lucado is tomorrow, Monday, at 1:00 p.m. in Knox Hall. The four lessons explore how the One who made everything chose to make himself nothing and came into our world. Jesus’ birth gives us the promise that God is always near us, always for us, and always within us — and that we no longer need to have marks on our record. These lessons include: “God Has a Face.” “Worship Works Wonders,” “God Guides the Wise,” and **“Every Heart Is a Manger.”** 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!*

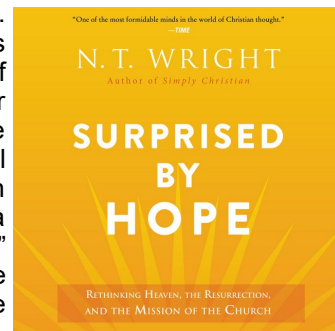
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service — All are invited to a Christmas Eve worship Lessons and Carols service at 7:00 p.m.. Please spread the word and invite others to this meditative and joyful expression in Word and music as the climax of the Christmas season.

Dr. Boushell “Flashback Fever” Concert — Join us on **Sunday, January 11** at 3:30 p.m. for our next concert in the Dr. Vernon Boushell Concert Series, featuring music from the 60’s and 70’s, performed by the Melbourne Municipal Band’s Rock & Roll Revue. A free ticket is required and can be and are now available on our website at www.riversidesbyterianchurch.org (Events/Event Tickets) or call 321-222-7875 for a Will-Call ticket.

Dr. Boushell 2025–2026 Concert Series — Volunteers Needed — Volunteer opportunities are available, and needed, for our upcoming 2025–26 Concert Series. We have several opportunities to serve such as: door greeters, parking attendees, check-in host for will-call tickets or printed tickets, hand out concert programs, and ushers. You can sign up at the Volunteer Board in the Narthex or email **Judy George** at jageorge42@gmail.com or place a note in the offering plate. Thank you for helping Riverside continue to share the gift of music!



A six-week Pastor’s Class begins on **Monday, January 12, at 1:00 p.m.** to study together N.T. Wright’s popular book, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. The class will last one hour. Wright’s premise is that Christians normally think of the future in terms of “heaven,” but the promised reality is far greater: a new heaven and a new earth, a whole new creation. He believes once we grasp this biblical vision of God’s future, it will transform our understanding of life in the present. Each session begins with a video segment given by Wright himself, followed by a group discussion. The six sessions include: “Hope for the World,” “The Hope of the Resurrection,” “The Hope of Heaven,” “The Hope of Jesus’ Second Coming,” “The Hope of Salvation,” and “The Hope of the Church.” *Look forward to seeing you in the class!*





Lift your prayers this week to the Throne of Grace for: **Elizabeth Deak, Bill Cheney, Susan White, Linda Harris, Clift Schmitt, Glenn Stout, Travis Stout, Roxanne Stout, Jorge & Coleen Castillo, David & Peggy Bishop, Doug Furls, Andrey Plata**; peace for Ukraine and the Middle East.

Please continue to remember **Donna McCrary and family** in your prayers, as her husband, Leon, entered Church Triumphant on Sunday, December 7. A Service of Witness to the Resurrection for Leon will be held here at Riverside on **Saturday morning, January 17, at 11:00**. *May God's peace and sure hope of the resurrection be with them in their bereavement!*

DAILY LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Monday	Morning: Psalms 122, 145; Evening: Psalms 40, 67 2 Samuel 7:18-29; Galatians 3:1-14; Luke 1:57-66
Tuesday	Morning: Psalms 33, 146; Evening: Psalms 85, 94 Jeremiah 31:1-14; Galatians 3:15-22; Luke 1:67-80
Wednesday	Morning: Psalms 50, 147:1-11; Evening: Psalms 53, 17 Isaiah 60:1-6; Galatians 3:23-4:7; Matthew 1:18-25
Thursday	Morning: Psalms 18:1-20, 147:12-20; Evening: Psalms 126, 62 Micah 4:1-5, 5:2-4; 1 John 4:7-16; John 3:31-36
Friday	Morning: Psalms 102, 148; Evening: Psalms 130, 16 2 Chronicles 24:17-22; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 7:59-8:8
Saturday	Morning: Psalms 90, 149; Evening: Psalms 80, 72 Proverbs 8:22-30; 1 John 5:1-12; John 13:20-35
Sunday	Morning: Psalms 24, 150; Evening: Psalms 25, 110 1 Samuel 1:1-2, 7b-28; Colossians 1:9-20; Luke 2:22-40

WHAT HAPPENED ON THIS DAY IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

✦ December 21 marks the traditional death of the **apostle Thomas** in India. He was reportedly killed "in the 30th year of the promulgation of the gospel," by Brahmins who were seeking to end his evangelistic activities. Learning he was in a cave, they went to the mountainside, saw him through the narrow opening, on his knees with his eyes closed, in a rapture so profound he appeared to be dead. They thrust a lance through the opening, wounding him mortally. ✦ **Hernando Cortes** and the conquistadors slaughtered and enslaved thousands of the Aztecs and Incas. On December 21, 1511, at the risk of his own life, Pastor **Antonio des Montesinos** stood before his church in Hispaniola and thundered against the conquistadors: "I have climbed to this pulpit to let you know of your sins, for I am the voice of Christ crying in the desert of this island, and you must not listen to me indifferently. You are in mortal sin; you not only are in it, but live in it and die in it because of the cruelty and tyranny you bring to bear on these innocent people." ✦ Pastor and hymnist, **John Newton**, died on this day in 1807 at the age of 82. One of his famous hymns had this stanza: But to those who have confessèd, / Loved and served the Lord below, / He will say, "Come near, ye blessèd, / See the kingdom I bestow. His other well-known hymns are "*Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*" and "*Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.*"

THIS WEEK AT RIVERSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 21 - 28, 2025

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Monday - Thursday

Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sunday School Classes
	10:00 a.m.	Worship — <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>
	11:15 a.m.	Fellowship Time (Fellowship Hall)
Monday	1:00 p.m.	Final Advent Study (Knox Hall)
Wednesday	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Sanctuary)
Thursday	<i>Merry Christmas!</i> (Office Closed until January 5)	
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sunday School Classes
	10:00 a.m.	Worship — <i>First Sunday of Christmas</i>
	11:15 a.m.	Fellowship Time (Fellowship Hall)

PSALM 66 PRAISE BAND

Guitar / Vocal — Keaton Belliveau, *Leader*

Bass guitar — Rafael Perez

Drums — Ryan Perez

Keyboard — Andrey Plata

Backup Vocals — Madalynn Pearson & Jordan Boggs

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Ministers: Entire Congregation / Assisted by:

Rev. William C. Teng, *Interim Pastor*, pastorbill@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org

Rev. Jane Wesson, *Parish Associate*, pastorjane@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org

Betsie Germann, *Administrative Assistant*, office@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org

Diana Amtower, *Traditional Music Director*, dldaubert@gmail.com

Keaton Belliveau, *Psalm 66 Praise Band Leader*, keanobmusic@gmail.com

Karen Ward, *Audio Visual Leader*

Doug Kasimier, *Treasurer*

Chuck Torgler, *Sexton*

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