

RIVERSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1986 - 1995

70th Anniversary

OUR COMMUNITY:

The decade was off to a chilly start in 1986. On January 28, after one of Central Florida's coldest nights, the Space Shuttle Challenger lifted off the launchpad carrying the first teacher in space, Christa McAuliffe. A few seconds after liftoff, the shuttle exploded, killing McAuliffe and six other astronauts onboard. For residents of Cocoa Beach, it was one of the saddest days in our history. Despite the tragedy, President Ronald Reagan vowed the Space Shuttle Program would continue, and in September 1988, the Space Coast witnessed the successful launch of Discovery and its five-man crew, proving space flight could move forward. Another industry was soaring, too, and soon the area became known as the East Coast Surfing capital. In 1992 Kelly Slater won his first Surfing World Title at age 20, becoming the youngest ever crowned by winning the prestigious Pipeline Masters in Hawaii. He went on to win the title eleven more times. Retirees and tourists had many reasons to continue to flock to our community.



OUR CHURCH:

Following the retirement of Rev. Pedlow in 1986, the Rev. A. Allen Brindisi was called to become the fifth pastor of Riverside in 1987. He and his wife Ann organized the first Spring Family Carnival in 1988, and the next year, Riverside sponsored the first Crop Walk in Cocoa Beach. The Memorial Garden was established 1991 and the Mariners were organized in 1994. The building of a new 500-seat sanctuary was approved in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$800,000. Groundbreaking took place May 30, 1993 and the first service was held in the new sanctuary on Palm Sunday, 1994. Church membership was 590 active members and 15 affiliate members. Rev. Brindisi supervised three seminary student interns at Riverside. One of them, the Rev. Jane Nicholas, became Riverside's Associate Pastor on September 1, 1993.



OUR PEOPLE:

Dr. Vernon Lee Boushell brought a lifelong passion for sacred music and excellence in choral leadership to our church. He had a PhD in music education and choral conducting, and decades of experience leading major works, which elevated the church's music ministry to make us the "music church." His vision and commitment led to what would become the Boushell Concert Series after his death in 2008. Many at Riverside remember another great leader, Brian Grigsby, whose quiet and steady service is built into the life of this campus. As chair of the Land Use Committee during a pivotal season, Brian helped guide decisions that shaped the sanctuary and championed the creation of a playground that served the Brevard Community College Lab School. His professional life—spanning early missile programs, 125 Delta rocket launches, and foundational work for the International Space Station—was marked by vision, precision, and collaboration, qualities he carried into his church service as an Elder and Deacon. Today, his wife Marilyn serves as church historian and active community member. Remembering faithful, forward-looking leadership offers a timely reminder: the spaces we steward today are the legacy we leave for tomorrow.

