



From the Pastor's Heart

"Where Is God When We Need Him Most?"

As the story goes: Students entering the lunch room at a theological seminary were greeted by a sign which read, "Take only one apple — God is watching you!" At the other end of the table was a large tray of chocolate chip cookies, next to which was a hastily scribbled sign which read, "Take as many as you want — God is back there watching the apples."

The humor of this story brings home a point that even though we often say we believe God is everywhere (omnipresence), we also sometimes wistfully hope that he is not where we are! We wish God is not with us when we don't want him to be with us — for example, in the case of this story, when we want to be mischievous. Or conversely, in a more serious note, we think God is not with us when we are going through difficult and trying times.

Very often we hear the question being asked, "Where was God when this (or that) happened?" It seems every time when there's any kind of untimely death or catastrophe, whether caused by human hands or nature, this question finds new expression among the survivors. In the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy, one of the oft-asked questions was, "Where was God when it happened?" Many people questioned God's seeming absence and silence through it all. And the same was true as we went through the COVID-19 global pandemic. In fact, this same question is often asked of what happened to Jesus in his darkest moments on the cross, when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34, *NRSV*).

I remember well when my mother breathed her last in my arms some 33 years ago — that was the loneliest moment in my life, because God seemed so far away! I had to struggle a long while just to begin to understand why God would let my mother, a woman of faith and faithfulness who ministered alongside my father for forty years, would die of such a dreadful disease? I questioned in my heart where God was when literally thousands of

people around the globe were praying for her recovery from cancer?

Does God really come and go as he pleases? Is God with us only when things go well and disappears when things begin to go south? Where is God when we need him most? Well, I would like to remind us all that God is *always* with us even though we might not know or sense it at the time. Two biblical examples come to mind: After Jacob woke up from his great dream at Bethel, about the ladder reaching up to heaven with the angels of God going up and down, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place — and I did not know it!" (Genesis 28:16).

And then, after Joseph had revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt and tried to allay their fears for revenge, he said, "And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life . . . So it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:5-8).

Wow, what powerful insight and great relief! God had been in it all along (but of course by no means excused the brothers for what they did to Joseph)!

Very often our own awareness of God's presence is found only in hindsight — much like the beloved poem, *"Footprints in the Sand,"* that only *after* we had been through those difficult times — when we looked back — that we realized God had been there all along. Our challenge then is to know in our heart and mind that God is always with us, rejoicing with us, even suffering with us — and he knows what we go through in life!

So, as we encourage our friends and family during these uncertain and trying times, or for whatever reason, let us remind them that God is with them, especially in times like this!

Yours in Christ,

Worship with Us!

IN-PERSON or "LIVE" BROADCAST
SUNDAY WORSHIP @ 10:00 a.m.

www.RiversidePC.org



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



Email: office@riversidepresbyterianchurch.org



September Birthdays

David McCrery	9/1
Nancy Ragland	9/3
Marilyn Cromer	9/7
Marjorie Anderson	9/8
Rebecca Burns	9/23
Karen Ward	9/24
Jen Fanning	9/29
Stephen Hoagland	9/29



Happy Birthday!!!

Warm Clothing Collection

We will be collecting clean and gently used clothing for the homeless folks in our area in **October**. It is hard to think of warm clothing when it is so hot outside right now, but we all know cool and cold weather will be arriving in our area in a few months. This is a good time to start clearing out clean, but still usable warm clothing from your closets and drawers.

The collected items will be taken to **Mathew's Hope in Cocoa**. Mathew's Hope welcomes all types of clothing and shoes (except for fancy or dress clothes or shoes). The items needed are coats, sweaters, caps, T-shirts, underwear, sox and shoes, for both men and women.

Collection boxes will be placed in the Narthex and in Fellowship Hall all the **month of October**.
Start gathering them now, and bring them to the church in October.



A Big Thank You!

A big thank you to those who participated in The Children's Hunger Project mission project. From those who brought food items, contributed funds, helped set up the packing lines and those who helped with the packing, as well as those who deliver the packed boxes to the schools — *May God richly bless you for your help in reducing weekend hunger in our local schools!*



Riverside Annual Charity Concert "Escape to Margaritaville"

with "Timmy Buffet" & the Hurricanes



Mark your calendar for Sunday, October 18 at 3:30 p.m. for our annual charity concert!
This year's proceeds will go the Brevard Sharing Center of Central Brevard.
Tickets are not yet available for sale. We will send an email when tickets are available.
Cost of the ticket will be \$15 per person and will be available on our website.

New Members Class

As part of our 70th Anniversary celebration, a New Members Class is being offered on **Saturday, October 3, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon**, and you'll be received into church membership on October 4, the day of the celebration.

If you've been worshipping at Riverside and would like to consider membership, please see Pastor Teng, or call the church office as soon as possible.



Pastor's Class

Mondays at 1:00 p.m.
(October 5 – November 16)



Living and interacting in a Post-Christian and pluralistic society is not exactly easy for Christians. There are just so many social issues that we face each day which require the "right" decision. How are we supposed to make these decisions? Does the Bible address these issues?

Come and explore these contemporary social issues in a 7-week series in a class beginning on **Monday, October 5, at 1:00 p.m. in Knox Hall**. Please see Pastor Teng for any questions.

The Christian Perspective on Contemporary Social Issues

- | | | |
|----------|----|---------------------------------|
| October | 5 | Pluralism |
| | 12 | Economics |
| | 19 | War |
| | 26 | Capital Punishment |
| November | 2 | Addiction/Substance Abuse |
| | 9 | Bioethics |
| | 16 | Homosexuality/Same-Sex Marriage |

70th Anniversary celebration Brunch



Celebrate Riverside
Presbyterian Church's 70th-year
Anniversary

**Sunday
October 4, 2026**

From 11:00am - 1:00pm
(immediately after Worship Service)

Starlite Restaurant

**HILTON GARDEN INN
2080 N Atlantic Ave, Cocoa Beach, FL**

Sunday Breakfast Buffet
Cost: \$20 PRE-PAID (gratuity and beverage included)

*Reserve
and
Pay
Online*



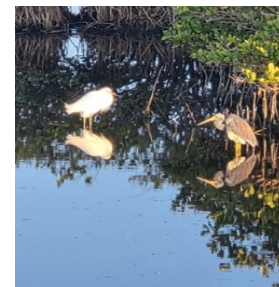
Riverside's
website under
"EVENTS"
or
Stop by
Church Office
to Reserve and
Pre-Pay

RIVERSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2016 - 2026

70th Anniversary

OUR COMMUNITY

The sleepy little town of 70 years ago has become a vibrant community of tourism and Space. Along with NASA, private companies such as Space X and Blue Origin continue to flourish here and in the skies. Keeping our beautiful shoreline and the Banana River lagoon pristine for our residents and visitors to enjoy has become paramount as we strive to maintain this fragile environment for all.



OUR CHURCH

In October 2016, Riverside marked its 60th Anniversary with a month-long celebration of history that included “60 Works for Riverside’s 60th Anniversary,” Kirkin’ O’ Tartans worship service, and “Gimme That Old Time Religion.”

Interim Pastor Melanie Ruta bade Riverside goodbye as Rev. Michael Hafele became our 7th minister on December 15, 2016. Following Hurricane Matthew, Riverside’s Chapel was demolished after repairs proved too costly. Upon Rev. Hafele’s departure, Rev. Dr. J. Roy Sharpe became Interim Pastor in September 2019 and served until Riverside called Rev. Dr. Chris Carson in 2021.

With the arrival of “Pastor Chris” and his family, a new enthusiasm began propelling Riverside forward with purpose. Congregational energy supported Children’s Hunger Project, Family Promise, Back-to-School Gift Cards, “Trunk or Treat,” Salvation Army’s “Stuff a Stocking,” and “Chris Carson’s Cruisin’ for Kids,” providing bikes, helmets, and locks for thirty kids!

The untimely death of Pastor Chris on July 12, 2024, sent a shock wave through the congregation. During the last 6 months of the year, 20 different ministers occupied the Sunday morning pulpit and/or served as Moderator of Session. On February 1, 2025, Rev. Dr. William “Bill” Teng, along with his wife Karen, became Interim Pastor while Riverside seeks a new pastor and prayerfully looks to the future.

OUR PEOPLE

Judy George’s life has been marked by a simple theme — caring for people and the places she loves. Judy and her husband came to Florida in the late 1960s after Dick’s military service. A veterinarian, Dick opened his own Merritt Island practice in 1969, with Judy working alongside him. Together they raised three children — Dick, Ruth Ella, and Rebecca — and today they enjoy nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. In 1986, Judy returned to nursing, working with the area’s first adult daycare program. She helped develop Fischer Park and the Brevard Museum of History, served on the Space Coast Art Show and healthcare boards, and helped with the early development of the Brevard Zoo.

After retirement, Judy brought her love of plants to care for Riverside’s landscaping — tending roses, weeding, watering, and planting. Her church service blossomed to include Sunday School, Youth, Care & Support, Education, VBS, Worship, Family Promise, and Children’s Hunger Project. Whether caring for a patient, building a community institution, or tending a rose, Judy has a gift for helping people — and things — flourish.





This year's Presbyterian women's study book is entitled: ***"United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians."*** The first lesson in September will cover chapters 1-2 and discuss unity in Christ and wisdom from God. Both circles would love to have you join us. We meet in Knox Parlor.

Hannah/Ruth/Rebecca meets the 3rd Tuesday at 1 p.m.
Deborah meets the 3rd Wednesday at 3 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 will be viewing and discussing Season 5 of "the Chosen."
 We meet **Wednesdays at 3 p.m. in Knox Parlor** (also available via Zoom).

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



Each Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m. in Calvin Hall
 our youth ages 12-18 meet for a safe, relaxed, and inviting place to grow together, laugh, belong, and be themselves.

Evenings include social time (sometimes dinner!), games, movies, cozy coffee-house atmosphere followed by short Bible-based conversations grounded in faith and real life,

Please pray for our youth as they grow in faith and grow together!



Men's Bible Study resumes Wednesday **September 2** at 8:30 a.m. in-person in Knox Parlor and via Zoom. We meet weekly and would love for you to join us! 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.

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



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 janelovett934@gmail.com

Jane Lovett

Sunday School

9:00 a.m.

K-5th grade

Fusion Youth

Pfieffer Room

Adults

Salvation, Calvinism and Arminianism
 Knox Parlor

Essentials of Faith: How Are We Changed?
 (Ladies class)
 Knox Galilee

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



2026 Financial (as of July 31)

Income	\$245,751
Operating Expenses	\$261,608
Net Income	(\$ 15,856)

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/Diaconate Update

The Session & Diaconate met jointly on Tuesday, August 18, beginning with a meal together. Pastor Bill Teng moderated.

Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) co-chairs, Chili Lindsay and Valerie Kellum presented the completed Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) to Session for approval. Session approved and it has now been sent to Presbytery for its approval.

Staff Resources Team presented newly updated Personnel Manual to Session for approval. Session approved contingent on addition of Head of Staff responsibilities.

The Property Team reported that the campus needs concrete work, and will prioritize projects.

Diaconate reported that Capeview Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary have merged, so they will be reaching out to Roosevelt to see if they would like to participate in the gift card drive with Riverside.

Next Deacons meeting will be **Tuesday, September 8 at 7:00 p.m.**

Next Session meeting will be **Tuesday, September 22 (*notice new date*) at 6:00 p.m.**

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Bill Teng

Interim Pastor

Rev. Jane Wesson

Parish Associate

Betsie Germann

Administrative Assistant

Doug Kasimier

Treasurer

Diana Amtower

Traditional Music Leader

Keaton Belliveau

Psalm 66 Praise Band Leader

Chuck Torgler

Custodian

Karen Ward

Web/IT/AV

Church Officers

SESSION

Terri Beeler '26

Anda Ray '26

Ann Stone '26

Carl Plaughter '26

Tom White '26

Meghan Johnson '27

Robert Howard '27

Paula Yost '27

Girard Middleton '28

DIACONATE

Janice Eastes '26

Carolyn Hattaway '26

Tammy Ivan '26

Jorge Castillo '27

Mary Mullin '27

Martha Williams '28

Fern Wolle '28

Bob Yost '28

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6pm First Tuesday Dinner	2 8:30a Men's Study 9:30a Stitchin' Sisters 10a Prayer Circle 10a Care & Support 3p Women's Study	3 7p Choir Rehearsal	4	5
6 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11a Labor Day BBQ/Potluck Communications	7 Labor Day Church Office Closed 7p NA Meeting	8 5:30p Anchor Youth 7p Diaconate Meeting	9 8:30a Men's Study 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study	10 7p Choir Rehearsal	11	12
13 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11a Fellowship Time 11a Worship & Sacrament	14 7p NA Meeting	15 1p HRR Circle 5:30p Anchor Youth	16 8:30a Men's Study 9:30a Stitchin' Sisters 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study	17 Via de Cristo Men's Weekend thru Sunday	18	19
20 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11a Fellowship Time	21 7p NA Meeting	22 5:30p Anchor Youth 6p Session Meeting	23 8:30a Men's Study 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study	24 7p Choir Rehearsal	25	26
27 9a Youth & Adult SS 10a Worship 11a Fellowship Time	28 7p NA Meeting	29 5:30p Anchor Youth	30 8:30a Men's Study 9:30a Stitchin' Sisters 10a Prayer Circle 3p Women's Study			