



The Spark

DECEMBER 2020 Celebrating 75 Years of Answering God's Call to Minister to All



Advent is an important time in the church. And this year, where we are not as distracted by society's Christmas hysteria, our Advent and Christmas will be that much more poignant and necessary. We will have our four Sunday's in Advent and a special Vesper Service called the Blue Service where we acknowledge that this Christmas is a difficult one for many of us. We will also have our Christmas Eve service outside with candlelight, music, prayer, and the retelling of the Nativity story from Luke. There are ZOOM group activities where we can be together via the internet and celebrate the season. Look inside this issue for all the upcoming activities of Advent.



Mission Statement

Riviera Presbyterian Church is a spiritual community that accepts and embraces all God's children.

We are a Matthew 25 Church

Missy's Message

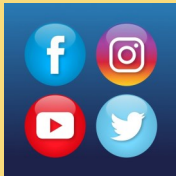
Riviera Presbyterian Church
5275 Sunset Drive
Miami, FL 33143
(305) 666-8586

11:00am Sunday Worship Service

Office Hours M - F 9:00-5:00

www.rivierachurch.org

Connect with us on social media



@RivieraChurch

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Session Members
Susan Admire
Karen Collier
Kyle Dettloff
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Amparo Hernandez
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Barbara Overton
Bryan Page
Rey Prieto
Michele Ready
Mimi Sutherland
Cris Sweeny

Riviera's Mission Statement

Riviera Presbyterian Church is a spiritual community that accepts and embraces all God's children.

Therefore:

- We engage with each other in joyful worship and thoughtful education.
- We dedicate our resources and talents

Donate

to
God's
work.

- And our hearts we open in active



December, 2020

Dear Riviera Family,

We had our first outdoor evening service the week before Thanksgiving. It was in the prayer garden and it was just beautiful. The evening breeze and the candles added to the wonder of the event. But an important part of the service was that it was also live-streamed so that others, not

able to be physically present due to COVID or distance, could be a part of it as well. We are committed, even when we go back to live indoor worship, to always have an online presence in worship, meetings, and even our fellowship opportunities.

Riviera has prided itself in its commitment to welcoming all people into our congregation, our mission, and our hearts. Our statement of inclusivity is at the core of what God calls us to be. We strive to be the church who welcomes all. And by removing the space barrier and allowing anyone to join us for all our activities online if they cannot be with us in person, we have broken another barrier and begun another dimension of welcome and inclusivity. It is our hope to have more evening vesper services throughout the pandemic and you can attend them online or in person.

I have to admit, I enjoy the years we have a Sunday after Thanksgiving before Advent starts. They are few and far between as most years are like this one, where Advent started on the 29th of November.... barely after our Thanksgiving meal was finished.

Advent is an important time in the church. And this year, where we are not as distracted by society's Christmas hysteria, I think our Advent and Christmas will be that much more poignant and necessary. We will have our four Sunday's in Advent and a special Vesper Service called the Blue Service where we acknowledge that this Christmas is a difficult one for many of us. We will also have our Christmas Eve service outside with candlelight, music, prayer, and the retelling of the Nativity story from Luke. There are ZOOM group activities where we can be together via the internet and celebrate the season.

This will be a very unusual Advent and Christmas. Some of us will be alone and most of us will be missing people and traditions that we love. But we are a church community and as a community we will move through Advent to Christmas together. One thing I do know is that Christmas comes every year. It is Emmanuel. It is the celebration of God being with us! And Riviera family, I feel God in our midst.

In Christ and Love,
Missy

Worship News...

WEDNESDAY EVENING VESPER • 6 PM • Prayer Garden

A Blue Christmas vesper service will be held on Wednesday, December 16. This gathering will require a mask, physical distancing and seating to be brought from home.

This small, physically distanced, outdoor evening Vespers service will be led by Rev. Martha Shiverick and Dr. Walter Busse.

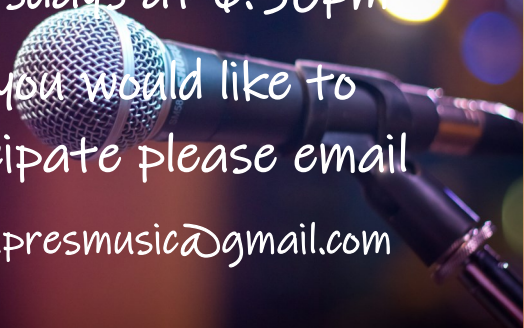
Registration via **EventBrite** using this link <https://bit.ly/367y8U5>

Space is limited. Please arrive early to check in and enjoy a meditative space of welcome. We look forward to seeing you.



Gathering with the Choir- Thursdays at 6:30pm

If you would like to
participate please email
rivierapresmusic@gmail.com



Ukulele Rehearsals 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month

If you want to be added to
the Zoom rehearsals
Please email
rivierapresmusic@gmail.com



CHRISTMAS EVE

Carols, Candles & Nativity story

RIVIERACHURCH.ORG - DEC. 24 @ 6PM



Join us in-person or online for a
Christmas Eve Service of carols,
candles and the Nativity Story

Limited capacity for in-person
worship. Ticket is required for
each person in attendance and
must bring a filled out Covid
Checklist : <https://bit.ly/2UYnj6G>

You may also watch online at
www.rivierachurch.org/live

Get your ticket by using this
Eventbrite link

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/
christmas-eve-service-tickets-
130496551699](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/christmas-eve-service-tickets-130496551699)

Please bring chair, mask and com-
pleted Covid checklist.

Mission News...



Dear Riviera Family,

One of the most powerful things that Christians claim is that God saw the great needs of the world and offered a perfect gift in response, a gift that brought God and humanity closer together. God's perfect gift, Jesus Christ. "Emmanuel, God is with us!" our Advent dream proclaims, as God joins in human life, and draws us together as a result. "God is with us" shows God values togetherness and relationship with us, leading us to value togetherness and relationship with one another. When we are all together — and even when we are apart.

During these past months, we weren't able to be together in person, but we have always been together in spirit, and in faith. We have missed seeing faces we love — up close and personal, but the physical distance has also revealed, for us, the importance of those things which bring us together, even when we are physically far apart.

We offer our gifts during this Advent Season to the Christmas Joy Offering because God shows us the power and importance of being together, of "being with." We might not be able to meet face to face with those who need the support that our gifts provide, but we are very much still together.

We support the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to be together with them. And we support church workers and their families who have critical financial needs and we come alongside them, to assist them — we are with them. And we see the witness of the whole Church, either gathered in buildings or connected home to home, member to member, sharing what we have, together. We thank God for being "with us" through the gift of Jesus and for joining us together as the Church and, through our gifts, with those who have need.

We can never match God's perfect gift in Jesus, but through the Christmas Joy Offering, we *can* testify to who we have known God to be. Our perfect gift comes from above. Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world — past, present and future.

Riviera's goal for 2020 is \$950. You can contribute to the offering on our website: <https://bit.ly/2KJlu4l>

God bless,
The Members of the Mission Committee

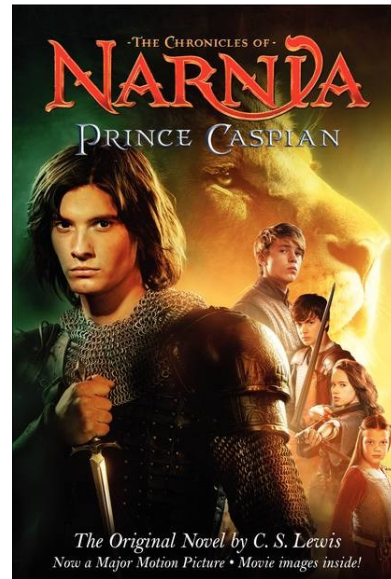


Discipleship News...

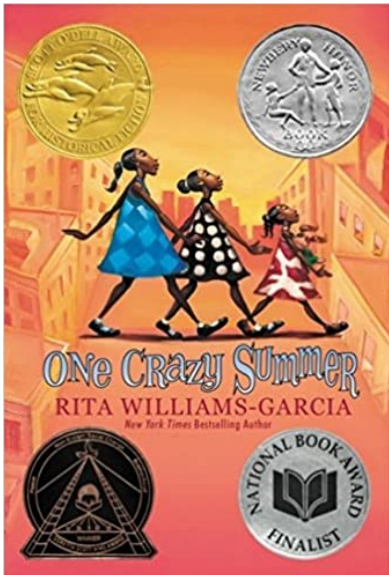
News from Anna



Children's Sunday School New Book Club Prince Caspian



Email Anna rivierapreschristianed@gmail.com for the Zoom link and Password!



Amy Bogardus-Valdivia is leading a 'Book Club' of Riviera youth: Emilee, Matthew, and Sofia. They are reading, *One Crazy Summer*, a historical fiction novel by American author, Rita Williams-Garcia.

This book club meets on Saturdays via Zoom. The youth are asked to read a few chapters before meeting so they can dis-

cuss the story and characters, read aloud important passages, and review any challenging words encountered.

Please contact Amy if you have any questions. She can be reached at 786-563-5289 or at abogardus@gmail.com.

A fun time was had at Beach Clean Up in November. Stay tuned for upcoming dates.



Discipleship News...

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

Cookie Baking & Decorating Get-Together

Zoom: With Susan Mazzola

Make: Sugar Cookies (or use purchased sugar cookie dough)

Create: Cut out Christmas shapes

Bake: Yummy smells will come out of your oven

Decorate: Use ready-made frostings and decorations

Share: Your edible creations with Riviera on Sunday's Holy Grounds Zoom

More information to follow - An ingredient and prep list will be available.

Saturday, Dec. 12 from 3 to 4 p.m.

Participate in this Virtual Get-Together via Zoom

Meeting ID 859 2866 0127 - Passcode 010101

Join us Sunday Mornings for
Zoom Online Adult Bible Study
Class

10:00 am - 10:30 am

This is a great opportunity to
study Sunday's sermon passage
with

Pastor Missy.

Meeting 860-148-3445

Password 2708

Sundays after worship

HOLY GROUNDS

<https://bit.ly/rpcsunday>

Session News...

The Session met on November 17th below are the highlights:

- Session elected Kathy Stults as the Church Treasurer for a Term of one year per the Book of Order.
- Session voted that they understand that by attending Zoom meetings with your face visible, your vote counts as if done in person.
- Pledges are coming in slowing. Members and Friends can pledge via this link:

<https://www.rivierachurch.org/give/pledge/>

Pastoral Care News...



Happy Birthday December Babies

Kathy S. - Dec. 10

Bonnie H. - Dec. 18

Sandy B. - Dec. 15

Ampy H. - Dec. 22



The Pastoral Care committee hosted a zoom open house Thanksgiving day. It was an opportunity for those who might be spending Thanksgiving away from friends and family to connect. There were about 10 people on the call. It was nice to be able to connect in this way.

Please feel free to reach out with any prayer requests (contact Bonnie at bfah@me.com) or if you just need some support during this holiday season. We're all here for each other!

Karen Collier, Elder

kc33134@aol.com