

THE SPARK



January 2025

Embodying Love - Demanding Justice - Transforming the World



Happy New Year!





MELANIE'S MESSAGE

January 2025 Embodying Love – Demanding Justice – Transforming the World

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

11:00am Sunday Worship Service
Office Hours M – R 9:30-6:30 pm
Sunday 9:00 – 1:00 pm
www.rivierachurch.org

Connect with us on social media
[@RivieraChurch](https://twitter.com/RivieraChurch)

All The People
Ministers

Rev. Melanie Marsh
Pastor
Rev.melanie.marsh@gmail.com

Dr. Walter Busse
Director of Music
rivierapresmusic@gmail.com

Diana Florez
Church Bookkeeper
rivierapresfinance@gmail.com

Barbara Prieto, CCA
Certified Church Administrator
rivierachurch@gmail.com

Session Members
Susan Mazzola
Clerk of Session

Gerardo Avitia
Karen Collier
Laura Fothergill
Angela Galbreath
Amparo Hernandez
Michele Ready
Kathy Stults
Cris Sweeny

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus also came to be baptized by John in the river. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven:

“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Beloved Community,

Happy New Year! Each year in the church, right at the beginning, we hear stories of the baptism of Jesus, that marked the beginning of his earthly ministry. We are invited to remember our own baptism at these times, and encouraged, if we have not been baptized, to partake in that sacrament in the presence of our community.

This year, on Sunday January 12th, we will be holding a community baptism service. Any parents who wish to have their children baptized, or any adults who have never been baptized and wish to be, are welcome to receive the sacrament of baptism in worship on this day.

Baptism, in our tradition, is a sacred acknowledgement that we have always been and will always be part of God's family. God chose us, and continues to choose us – all of us – long before we choose God. It is a gift freely given before we ask – before we even know how to ask! We hope you will join us on Baptism Sunday, and remember your baptism or receive your baptism as part of the community of faith.

May the blessings of the New Year be with you today and throughout the season,

Rev. Melanie

CONGREGATIONAL CARE



As we step into a new year, we are filled with joy and gratitude for each of you, especially those celebrating their birthdays in January!

May this new year of your life bring abundant blessings, good health, and countless moments of happiness. We pray that God's love continues to guide and surround you every step of the way.

Wishing you a very special birthday and a year filled with His grace and peace.



If we missed your January Birthday please send an email to the church office rivierachurch@gmail.com
Subject: January Birthday

Rosy S - January 5
Karen M - January 6
Caroline F - January 18
Melanie M - January 22
Luke Fouche - January 29

If you're not currently on our email prayer list but would love to join in praying for others, we'd be delighted to include you! Please email Bonnie at bfah@me.com, and she'll gladly add you to the list.

PRAYER

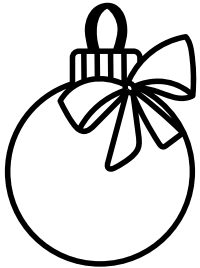
Joanne Ruzow, a longtime member of Riviera, passed away on December 16 or as her daughter said. "...Mama got her wings". She is the last surviving member of Riviera's Wednesday morning Bible study group - 6 ladies and Chuck.

Please pray for God's strength and comfort for Joanne's family and numerous friends.

FELLOWSHIP

On Sunday, January 5, we will celebrate Epiphany Sunday with a Three Kings Theme Potluck Lunch.

If you have a traditional dish that you and your family enjoy to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany/Three Kings, we would love for you to share it with us!



After lunch, we invite everyone to stay and help take down the decorations in the sanctuary. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated as we work together to prepare for the next season. If you want to help, please let Carol know by emailing her at abbysmami@me.com

Save the Date!

Join us for a delightful Beach Brunch at Crandon Park!

 Date: Saturday, February 8

 Time: Starting at 10:00 AM

 Location: Crandon Park - Shelter TBA

Bring your favorite beach-friendly brunch dish to share and enjoy a day of relaxation, great food, and fun by the ocean. Stay as long as you like, soaking in the sun, the soothing sound of the waves, and the joy of laughter.

We can't wait to see you there!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION-ADULTS

Bible study @ 10 am

10:00 am Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study is the best way to explore the day's scripture, ask questions, and connect with new and old friends. You do not have to be a member of the church to join this small group class. We offer the class in person and via Zoom. Child care is also available.

Meeting ID: 894-7650-2156 Passcode: 333227

Women's Study Group

The Women's Study group meets on the third Thursday of every month at 7:30 on Zoom, December 19. New members are welcome.

Meeting ID: 886-2278-6373 Passcode: 757192. Contact Karen C kc33134@aol.com for details



THEOLOGY
uncorked

Sunday, January 12, at 5:30pm

Join us, where we will share our hopes and concerns for the coming year and set personal and communal intentions for 2025.

Unseen Creatures Brewing & Blending 4178 SW 74CT 33155

MISSION



With your incredible generosity in 2024, we've made a profound impact on our community and beyond. Together, we've supported the hungry, the homeless, individuals transitioning from incarceration, those suffering in silence, and children in need of someone to believe in them.

This year, we collected essential items like food, socks, toys, toiletries, health care products, and monetary donations. We joined forces in initiatives such as the Souper Bowl of Caring, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness, and the Christmas Joy Gift Offerings of the PCUSA. Additionally, we extended our reach by supporting local organizations like the Green Haven Project and LEAP (Ladies Empowerment and Action Program).

Your compassion has made all of this possible, and we can't wait to see what incredible things we'll achieve together in 2025. Thank you for being part of this journey!

Here are thanks from the ladies in the LEAP program. Each Christmas we provide them with a gift card.

"I wanna thank you for all that you do. It's a blessing to have people who care about us and want to see us succeed, so thank you."

"I want to say thank you so much for your ongoing support you give to me and all the women in this program. It means so much!"

"I wanted to say thank you so much for my Target gift card. Also, thank you for your ongoing support here at LEAP. This program has changed my life in so many ways!!"

"Thank you so much! Your gift means so very much towards making my first Christmas in 10 years memorable. God Bless
Thank you so much! You made my Christmas"

SPF: STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE/PROPERTY

Exciting Challenge for Riviera's Congregation in 2025!

Each year, the PCUSA church asks congregations to contribute a Per Capita fee for every active adult member. For 2025, Riviera's Per Capita fee is \$2,614.41, which breaks down to **\$38 per member**.

Our 2025 goal is to raise the full amount by March 30th, and we need your help to make it happen!

To motivate everyone to participate, the Stewardship Committee is challenging the congregation to achieve 100% participation. And here's the fun part: If we reach our goal, we'll celebrate with a delicious ice cream social provided by Helados Unidos on Palm Sunday!

Let's come together as a community and make this goal a reality. Every contribution, big or small, helps us get closer to our target.

Thank you for your support and generosity!

You can pay online at www.rivierachurch.org/give, CashApp, Venmo @rivierachurch5275 #305-666-8586



2024 Contribution statements will be send out by January 31.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Enhance Your Life by Volunteering at Riviera!

Did you know that volunteering is one of the most rewarding ways to boost your health and happiness? Giving your time and talents not only enriches your life but also strengthens our community.

Here are a few opportunities for you to get involved at Riviera this month:

- **Share Your Love for Music:** Ask Walter about joining the choir, ukulele ensemble, or bell choir. Music is a fantastic stress reliever and a beautiful way to connect with others. Email Walter at rivierapresmusic@gmail.com
- **Bring a Treat:** Sign up to provide snacks for Holy Grounds—healthy options are always appreciated (but a few cookies can spread some sweetness, too!).
- **Brighten Someone's Day:** Be a greeter. A warm smile and a kind welcome in the morning can make all the difference.

Ready to make a difference? Start your journey as a Riviera volunteer today! Visit our website today: <https://rivierachurch.org/volunteer-opportunities/>

If you have any questions, please contact Barbie in the church office at rivierachurch@gmail.com

Stay tuned for more opportunities to volunteer in our various committees.



2024 December's
Communion