

THE SPARK

July 2025

Embodying Love - Demanding Justice - Transforming the World



A SUMMER WORSHIP SERIES AT
RIVIERA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

This We Believe

What do Presbyterians believe?

This summer, we'll explore our shared faith through scripture and the foundational confessions of the PC(USA). Each Sunday, we'll pair worship with engaging classes on contemporary social issues and Presbyterian responses.

| Date | Confession |
|---------|----------------------------|
| June 22 | The Apostle's Creed |
| June 29 | The Scots Confession |
| July 6 | The Barmen Declaration |
| July 13 | The Confession of 1967 |
| July 20 | A Brief Statement of Faith |

Join us Sundays at 11:00 AM

Classes and workshops follow throughout the week



MELANIE'S MESSAGE

July 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

All The People
Ministers

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

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

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

Clerk of Session
Kathy Stults

Session Members
Gerardo Avitia
Karen Collier
Laura Fothergill
Angela Galbreath
Amparo Hernandez
Michele Ready
Cris Sweeny

Greetings Riviera Family,

In just a few weeks, I will be traveling to the Presbyterian Youth Triennium.

Now in its 4th decade, the Triennium conference is hosted by the national youth ministry teams of the PC USA and Cumberland Presbyterian churches. Every three years, the conference hosts 3,000-5,000 young people for four days of worship, workshops, small groups and recreation.

This year, for the first time, we will be at the headquarters of the PCUSA in Louisville Kentucky. Over the past three years planning this event, We've gotten to spend a lot of time at the national offices of the PC USA. Every time we gather there, I am reminded of two things I love about our denomination:

1. Our long tradition of compassionate advocacy and activism for peace and justice across the globe.
2. Our mission to put young people front and center in that work at all levels and in every area.

One of the things that certainly led me on the path to ministry was the opportunity to participate in the ministry of the national church as a teen and young adult.

Even when it feels like they have many more things pulling at their focus and taking their time and energy these days, I am continually impressed by the wisdom, the work ethic, and the spiritual depth of the young people I've been privileged to minister alongside both in local churches and at national events.

I pray that you will keep us all in your prayers this summer as we all travel to the Triennium, and that we will all be able to work, rest, and rejoice in the presence of God during our time there.

Many Blessings,
Rev. Melanie

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

You're Invited: Recenter & Reconnect

The Congregational Care Committee initiated a conversation with our friends at the YES Institute to explore ways we can support one another through these challenging times. We're excited to invite you to an interactive learning series designed to recenter our well-being, strengthen community, and build resilience.

Please RSVP to reserve your spot. This workshop is open to all members and friends.



RESILIENCY, SELF-CARE & WELL-BEING

CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS
IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

We invite you to join one or both sessions
after Sunday service in the RPC Library:

Sunday, Aug 24 • 12:30 – 1:30pm

Sunday, Aug 31 • 12:30 – 1:30pm

Light lunch served • Facilitated by YES Institute

This year, many people are noticing increased anxiety, stress, and fear in their everyday life experience. National and global tensions, and other fast-moving societal changes, are challenging our sense of normalcy. We invite you to join us for an interactive learning series to recenter our well-being, strengthen belonging and community, generate empowerment, and prioritize self-care practices.

LEARNING OVERVIEW

- Protective well-being practices.
- Effective techniques to manage stress and regulate emotions.
- Self-care and wellness principles for resiliency amidst uncertainty.

To RSVP, please email:
rivierachurch@gmail.com



For additional details or questions, contact YES Institute
info@yesinstitute.org • 305-663-7195

MISSION

School is over, and Riviera gave summer reading books to all the first graders at Frances Tucker Elementary.

The kids were all very excited about receiving their own books. Ellen and Barbie enjoyed watching their faces light up.

School will start again before we know it. We want to help Frances Tucker Elementary as much as possible.

The school can use khaki and navy blue shorts, pants, skirts, and skorts as well as white and navy blue uniform shirts without logos. These can be left in the food pantry.

On July 13th, we will be distributing school supply requests to the first-grade teachers.

Please collect the items on the slips and return them to the church by August 10th.

On August 13th, everyone is invited to help deliver supplies to the first-grade teachers.

Shalom,
Ellen Anderson



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

THEOLOGY ungearorked

Join us this month for a thought-provoking evening of conversation, connection, and community. July's theme: If you could choose just one of today's most urgent social or political justice issues to stand up for, what would it be—and why?

Come prepared to reflect, share, and engage with others as we explore the challenges and convictions that shape our world today. All are welcome—bring your voice and your appetite!

We gather at Unseen Creatures, located at 4178 SW 74 CT, Miami, FL 33155

STEWARDSHIP, PROPERTY, FINANCE

Property Committee Update

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:00 PM via Zoom

If you've been through the narthex recently, you may have noticed ongoing work—that's the installation of our new, mandatory fire alarm system in the area formerly used for the food pantry. This important upgrade, with a total cost of over \$27,000, is just one way we care for our church home—ensuring it remains safe, welcoming, and functional for all who use it.

We're also glad to share that Viva el Español, the Spanish immersion camp using our Fellowship Hall this summer, has extended their program from 6 weeks to 9 weeks—welcome back! Questions?

Contact committee members Kathy, Butch, John G., Rey, or Tania.

THANK YOU & UPDATE

Dear Friends,

Thanks for your cards, calls, texts and emails conveying prayers, good wishes, and your love and support. All are very much appreciated.

Christian and I left Miami on Saturday, May 17. Our son Colin helped shepherd us through check-in, TSA, and importantly, boarding the plane. We did not tell Christian where we were going, and I believe he thought we were headed to our Farm in New York. Initially, he often spoke of 'going home' which for Christian meant the farm. While going home doesn't come up as much anymore, we continue to talk about the Farm often as Christian has strong and emotional ties to his family's home on Bald Hill.

We live at the Artisan at Hudson in Hudson, Massachusetts, an assisted living facility <https://artisanathudson.com>. Moving here was a difficult decision to make. I didn't know if we would go until I realized what was most important, and that was being close to Colin's home so there would be many opportunities for them - for us - to be together.

While I hadn't visited the facility, I knew the minute I walked in the building that I could live here. It's a new complex and our small apartment was the only one that was available. But by a bit of serendipity, the open floorplan, high ceilings, and large windows with a view of the trees and greenery along the Assabet River Rail Trail <https://www.traillink.com/trail/assabet-river-rail-trail/> make it a perfect place for the two of us. And a surprise - my daughter-in-law, Kim, and Colin had the apartment completely furnished and decorated when we walked in! Kim is the gift for me in this transition, and I now have the chance to get to know her better. (Colin & Kim were married on 1/25/2025!)

Alzheimer's and Aphasia are both progressive diseases. Christian doesn't remember a lot. Many times, it's difficult for him to convey his thoughts and sometimes understand what is being said to him. While he regained some strength in the rehabilitation hospital in Cutler Bay, he has not regained the ability to walk with a walker or cane. The belief is the Alzheimer's disease prevents him from relearning to stand and walk.

We take one day at a time and every day is different. I don't know what new limitations the diseases will bring; but I know they will come. The essence of Christian remains within him. He is still a gentleman, thanking the aides who come in to help him, which always puts a smile on their faces. He shakes the hands of new residents we meet; and he is courteous with those we share meals. In adjusting to our new life here, we seek and find small joys every day. I've joined a few of the community activities here, which allows me to meet other residents and share our stories; interactions which provide me with a sense of belonging and lightness, even amidst the challenges we face.

We're planning to go to Colin and Kim's home on Friday, June 27 to celebrate our granddaughter's graduation from Carlton College in Minnesota. We look forward to catching up with Eva and her partner, Ida (pronounced Ee-dah) who traveled from her home in Finland for the event.

We'll continue to worship with Riviera on Zoom when we can and stay in touch. Be well.

Love,

Susan and Christian Mazzola

WORSHIP, MARKETING, MEMBERSHIP

Google Reviews – Share the Good News About RPC!!

Do you ever find yourself checking online to see how good a restaurant is? Maybe you are heading out on vacation and want to see if other people enjoyed their stay at a hotel. What is the experience like? Reviews on web platforms like Google establish a reassurance, a trust and credibility as well as a transparency to the many decisions we make about where we spend our time or what we like to do.

The same is true for our faith community. Help us share the Good News about Riviera Presbyterian Church by writing an authentic and current review on Google. These insights and feedback help bring new members and provide exposure online for our community. Write from your heart, your perspective, and your experience. We suggest you don't use specific names, be mindful of grammar and sentence structure, also not too long and not too short. It is helpful to have a Google profile, though not required.

[Simply click here and tell the world about Riviera Presbyterian Church.](#)

Reviews

Reviews from the web

4.4/5 [Facebook](#) · 31 votes

Google review summary ⓘ



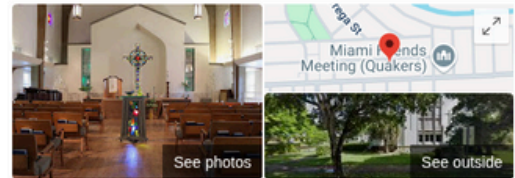
Reviews

Sort by

G Peral
4 reviews

★★★★★ 6 years ago

I come here for chorus (Miami Children's Chorus) every Monday and Wednesday. I was chosen for opera so we get to stay in the church. Every Time I come here, a wonderous feeling fills me up. The place truly seems as though it is blessed by heaven.



Riviera Presbyterian Church

4.3 ★★★★★ 8 Google reviews

Presbyterian church in Miami-Dade County, Florida

[Website](#) [Directions](#) [Reviews](#) [Saved](#)
[Share](#) [Call](#)

Address: 5275 Sunset Dr, Miami, FL 33143

Get There: 🚗 2 hr 4 min · 🚶 25 min

Phone: (305) 666-8586

Hours: Open · Closes 6 PM ▾

[Suggest an edit](#) · [Own this business?](#)

JUNE IN PICTURES



Helen, Max, Ilsa, Stephanie, Ruth, Cindy and Mark

Stay tuned on website for slideshow of 80th & 45th Anniversary Celebration. If you took pictures and would like to share please send them to rivierachurch@gmail.com