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**January/February  
 Upper Room  
 Devotionals are  
 available outside  
 the keypad door.**



**Stepping out with a Faith Budget in 2022**

*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ~ Jesus in Luke 6:38*

Greetings Church! As we nestle into 2022, we want to give you an update of strategic decisions that church leadership has made and how this will impact our church budget and stewardship needs.

As you all know, our church family has been financially generous for a number of years, and we have been faithful stewards to manage the giving well and ensure that it furthers our mission of loving people to life in the name of Christ. We are thankful that we have also been able to undertake some vital and needed projects, such as the capital campaign and equipping for the digital church mission field. Even with these projects and ongoing ministry, we ended 2021 with a surplus.

Over the last year, leadership increasingly believed that God was urging us to reinvest some of these funds to broaden our impact and make disciples for Jesus. While we wanted to be wise to save some funds for future unknowns, we knew God wanted us to use some of these resources to strengthen ministries and mission. After prayer and discernment, church leadership made a strategic decision that what was needed was an investment in church staffing. In addition to our amazing current staff, there were areas of ministry that had dealt with high turnover that needed attention. Therefore, two full time positions were created to focus on church engagement and adult small groups and youth ministry. We took months to formulate these positions, search, pray, and then hire outstanding staff persons. We also have needed to hire an additional media tech person to run the live stream and in person worship on Sunday morning.

This staff investment has increased our budget by \$61,000. We also anticipate spending in other ministry areas to increase closer to pre-pandemic levels. Therefore, we are budgeting a deficit for 2022. We know that we have the surplus of funds to supplement this vision and feel confident in Christ that we will eventually grow to meet these budgetary needs. As always, we thank God for inspiring faithful and growing generosity to keep in step with the kingdom mission!

Grateful in Christ,

Randy Reaves  
 Finance Committee Chair

Doug Jolley  
 Doug Jolley  
 Lay Leader

## Worship

During the month of February, we will cover a variety of topics in worship.

March 2nd—Ash Wednesday Service at 6:30pm

Our Lenten Series Theme is Simplify



# SIMPLIFY

## February Birthdays

### February 1

Delaney Weston  
Reid Weston

### February 4

Claire Benton

### February 6

Soyon Chang  
Amanda Jagnarian  
Abraham Rhodes  
Juanne Alexander

### February 7

Alicia Talley

### February 8

Alain Markey  
Jimmy Benson

### February 9

Danny Barrett  
Khasara Dye  
Temple Barrett

### February 10

Gib Seese  
Ben Blevins

### February 11

Sue McGlamery

### February 12

Bernard Fuemmeler

### February 15

Ed White  
Kathleen Fulton  
Brandon Oubre

### February 16

Ina Mae James  
Beverly Morrison

### February 19

Stephanie O'Neill

### February 20

Ellen Reaves

### February 23

Emileigh Benson  
Josh Neighbors

### February 24

Lupe Blevins  
Patty Willis  
Martha Hotinger

### February 26

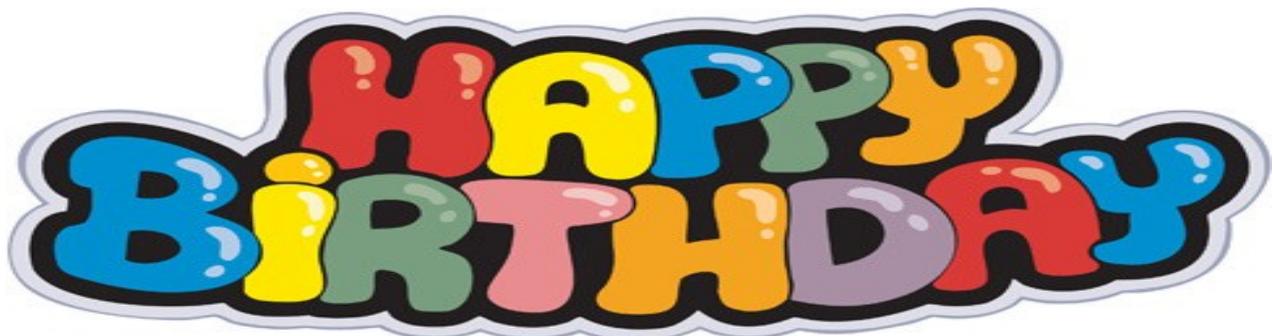
Daisy Banta

### February 27

Leslie Gayne

### February 28

John Honea



## Choose Community

“As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea...And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John...Immediately he called them; and they left their father...and followed him.”

Mark 1:16-20

As many of you know, I am a part-time seminary student, and this winter I am taking a class on the Gospel of Mark. One of my favorite things to do is in-depth Bible study, to dig deep beneath the layers of the text to discover meaning and connect the dots of God’s great narrative, so this class will likely turn out to be one of my favorites.

In Mark chapter one, one of the first things Jesus does in his early ministry is choose four disciples: Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John. He selects the most unlikely characters to be his closest companions, the inner circle of his growing band of disciples. Jesus shows us the importance of choosing community. He did not set out to do life alone. He chose to build relationships with others, and not just for the sake of training them to spread the gospel, but for his own companionship, encouragement, and support. Consider the ways Jesus relied on others for friendship (John 11:1-44), ministry partnership (Mark 11:1-7), comfort in times of difficulty (Matthew 26:36-45), financial support (Luke 8:1-3), and hospitality (Luke 10:38-39). Jesus needed community, and so do we.

Things are more difficult for everyone right now, but it’s in the most difficult times that we realize just how much we need each other. As we continue to find our way through the pandemic and strike a balance between “close-to-normal” and “still-really-far-from-normal,” let’s not give up on the relationships we need most.

Think about how you can choose community in the coming weeks.

How can you connect more deeply with your church family, whether you are joining us in-person or need to stay remote for a while longer?

How can you reach out to your church family to ask for or offer friendship, ministry partnership, comfort, support, or hospitality?

Consider how you can take a step towards choosing community for you and your family, just like Jesus stepped out to choose Peter, Andrew, James, and John to form an inner circle of support.

Check out this newsletter for all the ways you can engage with your church family both in person and remotely. Look for new opportunities coming soon for outdoor fellowship and new and exciting small groups forming this spring. Meanwhile, know that you are not alone. You are a valued part of this loving community of faith. And we need each other.

Lori Alford, Director of Engagement Ministries



Our youth are starting to roll! January marked the month of restarting our youth group program with a mission of creating the space for every youth at River Road to engage in the life of our church.

**Confirmation Class.** Our next confirmation class will be starting the first week of March, with Confirmation Sunday scheduled for Sunday, June 5th. The program is set up for any youth in grades 8-12 and is a wonderful opportunity to learn about our Church and God's calling in our lives. Children, Grandchildren, Nieces, Nephews, Friends - all are welcome to join our class and make the faith commitment that will last a lifetime. Please let Tom know at [youth@riverroadumc.org](mailto:youth@riverroadumc.org) if you know of a youth who may be interested.

**ADULT DISCIPLESHIP**

Hello!

I would like to highlight three of our Adult Small Group opportunities this month. Reach out to the group leader or myself ([tom@riverroadumc.org](mailto:tom@riverroadumc.org)) if you would like to join in the discussions.

**Group:** Racial Justice

**Leader:** Jaimey Honea

**When:** 2nd and 4th Sundays at 6:00pm via zoom

**Description:** We explore and discuss the effects of systemic and structural racism through books, podcasts and other media and discuss our journey to be anti-racist from a faith perspective.

**Group:** Study of The Chosen

**Leaders:** Barb Abu-Jaber and Bob Wilson

**When:** Starting Sunday, Feb 20th at 5:30 via zoom. 8 weeks long.

**Description:** Watch and discuss Season 2 of the show, The Chosen. A crowd-funded production, the show provides an account of Jesus and his disciples.

**Lenten Small Group Study:** Courage, by Tom Berlin

Starting Week of Feb 28th.

Details as to time/dates/leaders forthcoming.

**Description:** During Lent, we plan to host three groups (at different times) to discuss Rev. Tom Berlin's latest book. Learn more about the founding of the Child Rescue Center and other impacts of our faith and the courage it provides.

**Lenten Small Group Study:** Vincent Van Gogh and the Beauty of Lent

**Leader:** Roger Dowdy

**When:** Starting on Monday, Feb 21st at 6:30 via zoom. 9 weeks long.

**Description:** As part of the SALT project ([saltproject.org](http://saltproject.org)), the words of Scripture and the paintings and letters of Vincent van Gogh will be our guides leading up towards Easter.

Please continue to reach out with ideas and topics for our adult small groups and we will make them happen!

Blessings!

Tom

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**



**Schedule at RRUMC**

- **Online service at 9 AM**
- **Sunday School Classes (for adults & children) at 10 AM**
- **Blended Worship in the Sanctuary at 11 AM (live streamed)**
- **Children's Church at 11:15 AM. Zoom option available if worshipping from home.**

Children's Sunday School & Children's Church at 10 am & 11 am will have a socially distanced Sunday school lesson in our courtyard or the Fellowship Hall (weather dependent). After our lesson we head to the playground where you can pick up your children after service or your Sunday School class.

We continue to monitor shifts and changes during these times and encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns you have!

**Discipleship For February:**

This month we are focused on how God's compassion for us led to the greatest act of love the world had ever seen. God sent Jesus to rescue us. We reflect God's compassion when we care about others and work to make things right!

<b>WEEK ONE</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Jesus' Mission Statement Luke 4:14-24, 28-30	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Following Jesus means caring about others.
<b>WEEK TWO</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Jesus Talks With a Woman From Samaria John 4:1-30, 39-42	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Show others that they matter.
<b>WEEK THREE</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand John 6:1-13	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Use what you have to help others.
<b>WEEK FOUR</b>	<b>BIBLE STORY</b> Jesus Heals Bartimaeus Mark 10:46-52	<b>BOTTOM LINE</b> Make time to help others.

**FRANCES ALLEN/ALICE WEED CIRCLE:**

The Francis Allen/Alice Weed Circle meets the second Tuesday of every month. Everyone is invited to the next virtual meeting on February 8th at 10:00 AM. We will be working on 2 projects to help the teenagers at UMFS share God's love.

For the Zoom info please email Joan Peterson at [Jpeterson78@comcast.net](mailto:Jpeterson78@comcast.net)


**UMFS - EXCITING NEWS!**

Construction of the new UMFS Child and Family Healing Center building on the Broad Street campus is completed and the residential students are excitedly starting to move into their new home! You may remember seeing the outdated 1950s residential cottages on campus when you went for Craft and Caroling night or went on campus for the annual plant sale, or if you've volunteered as a tutor in the past. This new state of the art facility provides many meaningful upgrades. The building has five suites (like wings) that each accommodate 10 youth ages 11-18 that are living on campus for 3-18 months for customized therapeutic treatment to help them heal, many from acute mental health challenges. Each new suite has group and family therapy spaces, a modern and soothing decor, a skylight for natural sunlight, small kitchen, personal lockers, and even an outdoor green space that allows for a safe place outside the suite. Each youth has a private bedroom which includes a private bathroom. So much thought and love has gone into planning this new building, and it was made possible by the many generous donations from individuals, groups, and churches to their Be a Champion Capital Campaign. The RRUMC Missions Committee sponsored a tour of this new building for our church members last November and hopefully more opportunities for our church members to tour the building and the campus will open up in the Spring.

Stay tuned for news of Phase 2 of the building program which will focus on a much-needed expansion of the UMFS Charterhouse School.

**BOOK CLUB:**

We will have a Zoom meeting on the first Monday in February, February 7, 7PM. If interested call Ann York, 907-748-0446, and she will email the details. In February we will discuss Signs by Laura Lynne Jackson. To read ahead, March 7 we will discuss Cloud Cuckoo Lane by Anthony Doerr, and in April we will read Factory Man by Beth Macy about the Bassett furniture industry in Virginia. A wide variety of books, so please join our friendly group if you are a book lover.

**CREATION CARE**

Things to be thankful for, to be concerned about, or to do.

First, things to be thankful for: 1) "The Interior Department....recommended that the federal government raise the fees that oil and gas companies pay to drill on public lands....the first increase...since 1920...."; (NYT; 11/27; p. A 19); 2) "State and Collaborators Celebrate the Success of Restoration Projects in Chesapeake Bay's Tributaries" (RTD;12/21; p. C1); 3) Under the auspices of NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) the U.S. has made significant progress in reducing or eliminating overfishing'; 4) "Reducing carbon emissions is a big, complex challenge....That's why we're building the largest offshore wind farm in the United States. The Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Project" (RTD; 1/13; p. A3); 5) It is worth remembering how far Richmond has come in restoring, protecting and appreciating the James River. At mid-20th century, the James in Richmond was polluted. There was no public access... dams blocked fish passage...Bottom line, the river was abused and ignored...it is now the most visited attraction in Richmond with nearly 2 million visits per year (RTD; 12/26; p. D1); 6) The EPA "announced strengthened limits on pollution from automobile tailpipes" (NYT; 12/21; p. B3) and will begin more rigorous analysis of the potentially harmful effects of the active ingredients in any new pesticide (see [press@epa.gov](mailto:press@epa.gov)); 7) Hats off to Ducks Unlimited ("Leader in Wetlands Conservation") since wetlands are the key to absorbing excess phosphorus, an ingredient in home and farm fertilizer, and a "worldwide water pollutant, devastating ecosystems, wildlife and water quality." Key concerns include: 1) "States across the U.S. are looking to adopt new recycling regimes that require producers of packaging to pay for its inevitable disposal - but industry is digging in to try to halt the

### **GIFTS FOR THE MANGER**

Thank you for remembering Christ in your Christmas giving by supporting Gifts for the Manger. We collected a total of \$13,805 – \$4363 for Housing Families First, \$4126 for Open Table, and \$4816 for UMFS. The remaining \$500 was contributed to other organizations. We, and the children and families that these organizations serve, are blessed by your generosity.

### **RISE AGAINST HUNGER**

The Christmas Eve offering of \$7635 (thank you congregation for your generous giving in honor of Christ's birthday) will be contributed to Rise Against Hunger to support our meal packing event scheduled for April 24. Mark your calendars and watch for more details about the event. It is always great fun for a great cause, and there are roles for everyone in the family to participate. Rebuilding Together will also be in the spring. It is a joy to return to hands-on missions.

### **EVA HUSTON PANTRY**

Esther Tuopay delivered the Christmas gifts we collected in the fall to the children in the orphanages and schools in Liberia. What a joy to see the photos of the children as they found clothing, shoes, toys and gifts contributed in the spirit of Christmas. Check out a few of the photos on the app. Thanks to Esther and her family for delivering the gifts and for sharing with us this opportunity to make a difference for children. Thanks also to Karen Carter for working with Esther on the collection. River Road truly lived out the spirit of Christmas.

### **FOOD PANTRIES**

We are grateful for your continued support of the food pantries and Safe Harbor. The need remains great especially with the colder weather and the end of the child tax credit. Most-needed items are peanut butter and jelly; spaghetti noodles; canned fruit and vegetables; canned soups and beans; canned chicken and tuna; ravioli/spaghetios; boxed cereal; oatmeal; bags of pinto and black beans; 15 oz canned tomato sauce or 24 oz (approximately) pasta sauce; non-refrigerated microwave meals; and diapers and wipes. Standard sizes are appreciated for packing purposes and no glass containers.

Thanks be to God for leading us to love our neighbors. For more missions information, contact Ann Hodges, [ahodges@richmond.edu](mailto:ahodges@richmond.edu) or 804-339-9440.

<b>CREATION CARE <i>continued</i></b>
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movement. Maine became the first state to adopt such a program....laws like Maine's would incentivize industry to stop creating excessive packaging in the first place" (RTD; 8/1; p. B 11); 2) "Extinctions Imperil the Planet's Biodiversity....The extinction of plants and animals is accelerating...Bugs on our windshields are no longer a summer thing as insect populations plummet. Nearly three billion birds have been lost in North America...[and] there are no technological fixes. And no cost-effective replacement for natural systems like wetlands...Climate change and biodiversity loss are locked together in a cycle of destruction that must be dealt with in tandem" (NYT; 10/4; p. A 21);

and, of course: Things we can do include: 1) "Check out 'Eight simple actions that individuals can do to save insects from global declines...(pnas.org)"; 2) Subscribe to "Save the Bay" (free) and track the myriad ways in which you can make a difference in fully restoring the Chesapeake Bay (e.g., check out [cbf.org/calendar](http://cbf.org/calendar) or [cbf.org/casa](http://cbf.org/casa)); 3) Speaking up, advocating and voting for *creation care* (not only at the ballot box but by what you buy and how you spend); 4) Embracing the 7 R's of "shrinking your (personal) footprint": *Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rent* (or borrow), *Recycle & Rot*; and 5) Joining sandupporting the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a host of other non-partisan nonprofits working daily to create a more sustainable world (e.g., The Nature Conservancy; Greenpeace; EDF; Ducks Unlimited; Sierra Club; Audubon Society; WWF, Wild Virginia, etc.); Amen....Respectfully submitted, Michael j Wriston, Chair, Earth Advocacy Committee, RRUMC



RIVER ROAD  
UNITED METHODIST  
LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

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February 2022

**Articles for the  
March 2022  
Connections are due  
February 21, 2022.**



We're on the web at  
[www.riverroadumc.org](http://www.riverroadumc.org)



CHOOSE COMMUNITY

# OUTDOOR FELLOWSHIP

2ND & 4TH SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP  
HOT BEVERAGES | COOKIES

## Open Arms Christian Preschool

The children at OACP have been enjoying the winter weather and learning all about winter and hibernating animals! The children have loved the snow that we got in the area. The older children were all bundled up and played outside and the younger children had a



chance to experience it in the classrooms in their sensory bins. What a fun time for everyone! During the month of February we begin offering spots to families, that are not currently enrolled at OACP, for the new school year (Fall 2022). If you, or your family or friends, are interested in our program, please have them reach out to Nora Hamlet, 804-754-0227 [openarms@riverroadumc.org](mailto:openarms@riverroadumc.org) and inquire about openings for the 2022-2023 school year program.



**OPEN ARMS**  
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

*Helping children grow with open hearts, open minds and open arms.*