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

**THE UPPER
ROOM**
DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

January 2023 *Yes, it's 2023!*

We are at that time of year, the beginning, when, staring down an entirely new year, we resolve to make changes for the good. It may be changes that affect our bodies, such as eating healthier foods, getting more consistent rest, or re-committing to moving our body through exercise. It may be changes that affect us relationally, such as meals at the table as a family, unplugged time together, or doing the work to talk through and listen well. It may be changes that affect us professionally, such as starting up a certification process that hones a particular aptitude, shoring up study skills, or stepping out to apply for that compelling position. Maybe we need to make a change that adds something to our lives—a commitment to serve—or we need to minimize the calendar by slowing the pace and letting some activities go. Now that 2023 is here, with all the possibilities, what is God urging you to **do** or **release**?

I believe that faith, your relationship with God in Jesus Christ, can both clarify and empower whichever potential for transformation and change you have sensed God whisper into your soul. Jesus was clear in John 10:10 when he said why he came. He said: “I have come that you might know life in all its fullness.” God wants us (and all) to know a fullness or wholeness in our very beings, in this life and extending into the next. God wants us to know a wholeness in our bodies, relationships, vocations, and the ways in which we serve others. We also remember that God’s definition of wholeness differs from ours. It does not mean that our bodies will always work the ways in which we want, that our relationships will not know strains or cracks, and that we won’t need to give up something for others to have what they need. In fact, it is often during these times that we would call “broken” that God does some of God’s best work.

Change is hard, and God is big. God wants wholeness for you and for all. Where are you being asked to step out to enter the transformation process?

Still wondering where and how? Here are a few suggestions:

Identify what kind of change you hope for in your life.

Start small with incremental steps.

Share with someone your hope for change. It is proven that we change more consistently and with greater impact with accountability. Even better if someone will join with you in your small steps.

Pray that God will empower you to live into the change you hope to experience.

As we all strive and struggle together to receive the wholeness of God and to resist that which would keep us fragmented and afraid, remember that the very power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work within us all to help us know God’s newness as well. This is going to be a redemptive and hope-filled year. Let’s open ourselves up to the fullness God wants for us and for all.

Happy New Year in Christ!

Pastor Darcey

Worship January 2023

January 8: Epiphany Sunday

January 15: Rev. Craig Kocher

Join us for worship!

9am—Contemporary Service in the Fellowship Hall

11am—Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

January Birthdays

January 1

Chris Oubre
Wendy Travis

January 6

Betty Hatcher
Sarah Anthes

January 13

David Hudson
Zoe Bell

January 18

Burk May

January 24

Cindy Spieth

January 29

Adam Kemp
Cline Wood
Rhodes Ritenour Jr.

January 2

Katherine Anthes
Himans Alexander

January 8

Paul Pitts
Mark Whetstine
Will Mann

January 14

Sarah York

January 19

Cheryl Bowles

January 25

Paula Tatar

January 31

Tom Simmons

January 3

John Gresham
Roger Dowdy

January 10

Kate Morrison
Alexa Cornett

January 15

Ann York
Megan Gilliland

January 20

Joyce May
Jack Stuckey
Kate Stuckey
McRae Stuckey

January 26

Don Jeffrey

January 4

Karen Carter

January 11

Melinda Sledd

January 16

Gene James
Vince Narron

January 22

Nick Gilliland

January 27

Whit Anthes
Carson Moum

January 5

Chris Price
Jackson Vines

January 12

Cathy Reid
Maggie Hiatt
James Gilliland

January 17

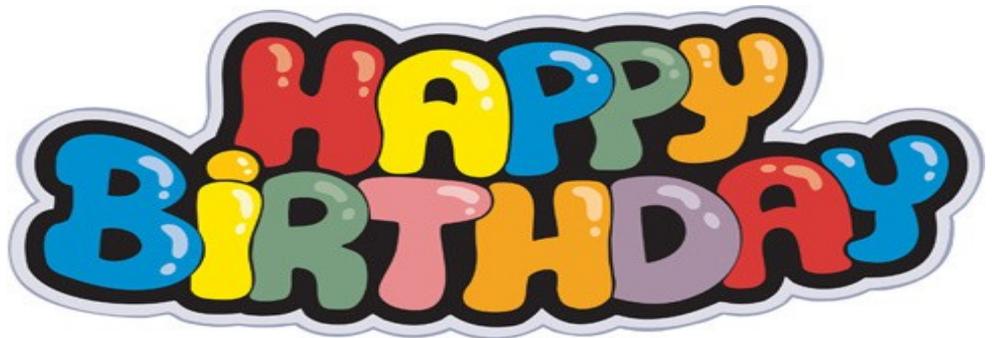
Drew Johnson
Mac Stuckey
Nathaniel Walunas

January 23

Betsy Hiatt

January 28

Bill Kuehl





begin again

A clean start. A do-over. Second (or third or fourth...) chances.

January offers us the opportunity to begin again, to refocus, and reprioritize. As we peer into 2023, let's consider how God might be nudging us to begin again.

In what areas of your life could you use a do-over from last year?

What has you feeling depleted and in need of re-charging in the coming year?

How might deeper connections with a supportive community help you in your daily life?

Thinking about these questions can help us establish new priorities for the coming year—for ourselves and for our families.

Here at River Road UMC, there are many opportunities to engage in life-changing discipleship, service, mission, worship, and enriching relationships. Pray about how you and your family can experience more with God in 2023, then take a step of faith and try something new in the coming year. Join a small group. Participate in a mission project. Volunteer. Be present in worship and receive the incredible blessings God has in store for you. This is the perfect time to begin again.

Want to find out more? Email Lori at engagement@riverroadumc.org.



get engaged

Whatever your interests or gifts, there are many ways to get engaged at River Road UMC. Here are a few ideas to consider:

Join an adult small group

Serve as a greeter/usher for Sunday morning worship

Volunteer in youth or children's ministry

Prepare or purchase meals for the Meals Ministry

Lend a hand with yardwork or building upkeep

Participate in one of our many missions projects

Join the Choir or Handbell Choir

Questions? Email Lori at engagement@riverroadumc.org to ask how you can connect with existing ministries or help launch something new.

Confirmation Class Upcoming! We are planning our next Confirmation Class for Youth to occur from February to May of 2023. Let Tom know of *any* youth who may be interested in learning more about their faith and our church. They do not need to be members of our church to be part of confirmation. Tom will be glad to talk to the family of the youth to provide more information. Here is an overview of our confirmation program:



For youth, typically from 7th grade and up. Most youth participating are in the 8th/9th grade.

12 week program led by Pastor Darcey Johnson, starting Feb 5th. Youth meet in a classroom setting once a week for an hour and half, with a weekend retreat a key part of the program.

Goal of the program is to inform and allow the youth to make their own choice about being a part of the church -whether now or later. The Holy Spirit guides the process for all.

If confirmands choose to join our church, the program finishes on Pentecost Sunday welcoming our new church members.

We hope to make a difference in the lives of all youth in our community. Let Tom know of any youth interested in joining this year's program.

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

As we enter 2023, we hope to launch weekly neighborhood small groups to support each other in presence, prayer and praise. Our church membership is spread throughout the Richmond area - it can take over an hour to drive between the homes of active church members! We hope groups on the North Side, South of the James, and in the Near and Far West End will help continue our ministry during the week. Each week, our church will provide scripture and discussion questions based off the Sunday Sermon to guide the conversation.

Let Tom know if you are interested in being a part of a group! In particular, we will be looking for those willing to host an evening group at their home and to help coordinate in their local area.

Also in January, we will be starting up an Alzheimer's Support Group to occur on the fourth Thursday of each month at our church. Many thanks to Ann York and Bess Traylor for going through the training and certification process to be able to host this group which is open to anyone in our broader community

Reach out to tom@riverroadumc.org if you are looking to join (or lead!) any of our discipleship groups.

Blessings!

Tom

Join us Sunday mornings!

River Road Kids Discipleship Hour will be at 10 AM in the Sunday School wing and Children's Church will be held at the 9 & 11 AM worship services in the Sunday School wing.

Preschool Discipleship for January:

This month, our preschoolers are going to step into their own wonderful workshop as we discover some of the amazing things Jesus did. Everything Jesus did – and the way He did them – showed everyone around Him that He was God's son, and that means that Jesus is amazing!

We are going to have a lot of fun with preschoolers as we tinker and create together. So, get your workshops ready! It's time for our preschoolers to discover how Jesus is amazing!

Memory Verse for January:

“EVERYONE WHO HEARD HIM WAS AMAZED.”

LUKE 2:47, NIV

K-5 Discipleship for January:

God is the author of knowledge. Everything we know to be true about the world is because of God. And while we may never know all there is to know ABOUT God, there are lots of ways we can get to KNOW God. We can know God best through Jesus, who showed us how much God loves us and showed why knowledge is so important. The more we know God, the better we can live God's way each day.

Memory Verse For January:

“THE LORD GIVES WISDOM. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING COME FROM HIS MOUTH.”

PROVERBS 2:6, NIRV



FRANCES ALLEN/ALICE WEED CIRCLE:

The Francis Allen/Alice Weed Circle meets the second Tuesday of every month. Everyone is invited to the next meeting on January 10th at 10:00AM in room 205/207. Come and join us!



United
Women
in Faith

BOOK CLUB:

The First Monday Book club will meet January 2 to discuss **Remarkably Bright Creatures** by Shelby VanPelt led by Ann. February 6 will be **The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post** by Allison Pataki led by Beth Berteneau. So, all of you readers come join us and keep reading!

We meet at 7PM at Ann York's home, 2800 Chancel Lane. All are welcome to come. Just show up or call Ann at 907-748-0446.

If anyone is interested, contact Ann York, annYorkak@gmail.com and you will be put on the mailing list. I will sent out notifications of the meetings to everyone on my list.

The Second Monday Book Club went out for lunch for our December meeting.

The selection, **The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post** by Allison Pataki will be reviewed by Bess on January 9th. It is a great book with lots of interesting history that involved Marjorie Post as the participant. Judy will review **The Measure** on February 13th.

Please come by 11129 Woodbaron Court for the gathering and reviews.

CREATION CARE

First, things to be thankful for: 1) "Brazil, Indonesia and Congo to Work Together on Protecting Rainforests" (NYT, 11/15, p. A 8); 2) "Big Wind Farms Arise in North Sea Oil Fields" (NYT, 11/29, p. B1); 3) "SHOOD recycles running shoes for those needing fresh treads" (Chesterfield Observer, 9/21, p. 3); 4) "U.S. lab hits milestone on long road toward fusion energy" (RTD, 1/27, p. A 12); 5) "Its Aquifer Dwindling, Virginia Finds a Solution in the Sewers . . . cities and towns are increasingly turning to treated wastewater" (NYT, 10/21, p. A 1); 6) "High-Tech Fishing Gear Used to Shield Whales" (WSJ, 12/9, A. 6).

Second, things to be concerned about: 1) "Humans Are Rapidly Crowding Out Other Species . . . Biodiversity . . . is declining at rates unprecedented . . . [A] million species are threatened with extinction" (NYT, 12/16, p. A6); 2) "Climate change isn't a problem that can be solved by summoning the 'will'. It isn't a problem that can be 'fixed' or 'conquered'. . . . It isn't going to have a 'happy ending', or a 'win-win ending' Whatever we might want to believe about our future, there are limits, and we are up against them" (*ibid*, The New Yorker, 11/28); 3) "According to a recent study, 275 million people around the globe are subjected to life-threatening temperatures at least one day a year, and this number could easily grow to 800 million by the middle of the century" (*ibid*); and

Third, things to do: 1) Choose electric over gas whenever possible; 2) Reduce, reuse and recycle; and 3) Speak up, advocate and support organizations and nonprofits who have made global warming and climate change their priority.

Respectfully, and hopefully, submitted.....Michael j Wriston, Chair, Earth Advocacy Committee
(River Road United Methodist Church)

GIFTS FOR THE MANGER

It is not too late to give a gift to Jesus this Christmas. Our chosen missions this year are UMCOR-Hurricane Relief, Mission Trips, and CrossOver Healthcare Ministry, along with Open Table, which we highlight every year because there is ongoing need among our Open Table friends. A check or online gift in January will be included with our gifts for these four important missions. Watch for more information about the summer mission trip. Now that you have helped fund the trip, perhaps you'd like to join. Contact Tom York if you are interested.

ANGEL TREE

With your help, we were able to provide gifts for all of our angels. You made Christmas real for 100 children with an incarcerated family member. Thanks to Laurel Marks for leading this mission again this year.

ONGOING NEEDS - FOOD PANTRIES

The need for food at the pantries at Ginter Park United Methodist Church, Belmont United Methodist Church and St. Paul's Catholic Church and for residents of the shelter at Safe Harbor continues. Your support is much appreciated. Most-needed items remain peanut butter; tomato sauce in 15 oz. cans; 1 lb. spaghetti noodles; canned fruit and vegetables; canned soups and beans; canned chicken and tuna; ravioli/spaghetios; boxed cereal; oatmeal; non-refrigerated microwave meals; diapers (sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most needed); and wipes. Standard container sizes are appreciated for packing purposes and no glass containers. Weekly updates will highlight particular needs. Thanks to Tony and Jean Barnette, George and Sari Eapen, Mark and Charlotte Allred, Mark and Connie Whetstine, Stephanie and Daniel O'Neill, Tom York, and the youth group for their work on this mission.

COLD WEATHER CLOTHES DRIVE

UWF and the Circle are collecting warm clothes for cold weather clothes (coats, gloves, warm socks, warm sweaters, etc.) for men and women this winter for the needy. There is a huge need for these as the cold weather arrives. We will collect them in room 203 or the yellow cooler near the keypad door. Thank you River Road for caring and participating in this endeavor!

UPCOMING MISSIONS

In early 2023, we will be doing another collection for the Eva Huston Pantry for the July trip to Liberia. Other spring missions include the Rise Against Hunger food packing event and repairing homes with Rebuilding Together. Watch for more information about these important missions.

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



RIVER ROAD
UNITED METHODIST
LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

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Phone: 804-740-7061
Fax: 804-740-3367
Preschool: 754-0227

January 2023

**Articles for the
February 2023
Connections are due
January 20, 2023.**



We're on the web at
www.riverroadumc.org

The church staff would like to express our gratitude to each of you who contributed so generously to the year-end love offering on our behalf. It is a pleasure and a joy to serve Christ with you! Thank you, and may God bless each of you in the new year!

Thank you!

Open Arms Christian Preschool

Last month we had a wonderful celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Open Arms Christian Preschool. The children spent the whole month celebrating Advent and learning about the birth of Jesus. It was a beautiful time, with many children sharing their love of Christ at OACP and RRUMC. The families gathered in the sanctuary the week before our Christmas break to see the children perform the "Christmas Story". What a blessing to be able to share this with our OACP families!



In January we will be securing spots for current families for the 2023-2024 school year and offering open spots to families on our waitlist. If you or any of your family and friends are looking to enroll a child at OACP, please contact the Preschool Director, Nora Hamlet, at 804-754-0227 or email her at openarms@riverroadumc.org.



OPEN ARMS
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

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