



**Inside this issue:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Worship Series                                       | 2 |
| Get Engaged  | 3 |
| Youth  | 4 |
| Children & Adult Discipleship                        | 5 |
| Women's Ministry & Birthdays                         | 6 |
| Missions   | 7 |
| Welcome Pastor Sarah & Open Arms Christian Preschool | 8 |

**July/August Upper Room Devotionals are available in the Narthex and Welcome Center.**



**SUMMER OFFICE HOURS**

Through Labor Day, the office will be open from

Monday: 7am—5pm

Tuesday—Thursday:  
7:30am—5:30pm

**The office will be closed on Fridays.**

**Greetings River Road family!**

Greetings River Road family! I am so excited to come and serve God with you all as your pastor. My first day in the office is June 27 and my first Sunday is July 2. Already I have been warmly welcomed by the folks on the SPRC Committee, the Church Council and by the amazing staff. I am humbled and honored to be appointed to serve with all of them and all of you. I look forward to learning names and hearing your faith stories. Robert and I are excited to join you in the amazing work you are already doing for the kingdom of God.

Recently, I joined with the Church Council and staff in an onboarding process. This was a helpful orientation for me to the priorities, passions and history of River Road. As part of the process people were invited to ask me questions. I would like to share some of those questions and answers with you so that you can get to know me better.

1. What is your call story?

There are so many bits and pieces to my ongoing call story. I will share some of those bits and pieces in sermons over the summer. The "aha!" moment I had was actually in a Christian Education class at Memphis Theological Seminary. A deacon, Dr. Virginia Lee, paused her planned lecture to tell us her call story. I remember she specifically said, "My call story was not a one-time mountain top experience, it has been a series of moments that kept calling me to ordained ministry." I felt like she was talking just to me. The Holy Spirit had been nudging me for years, late night faith conversations with friends on the floor of the chapel at Sewanee, words of affirmation after I taught a Sunday School lesson, cousins at a family reunion in Texas asking me to lead a worship and blessing service when the priest that had been invited had to cancel. After that class, I went home to my husband and nervously said, "I think Jesus is calling me to be an ordained pastor." Rob looked at me and said, "I already knew that. I'm glad you know it now too." That was my blessed assurance moment that I was on the right path and my life has been better ever since I invited the Holy Spirit to walk next to me, rather than trying to dodge the nudges.

2. What is your favorite thing to preach on? Love. I believe our universal human purpose is to learn to love God, love our neighbor and love ourselves perfectly. In July and August I will be preaching on my current favorite Bible verses, "Jesus replied, 'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind...You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.'" Matthew 22:37-40

3. What is your favorite color? Purple.

4. What are you excited about at River Road? I have heard from your current members and former pastors about your passion for missions. I am excited to be at a vibrant, active church that cares for one another deeply. I have heard and seen the amazing worship services you all participate in to honor and praise God. I have already seen so many spiritual gifts that people are using to help

*Continued on next page...*

# Upcoming Worship

## with Pastor Sarah Sealand:

July 2 —Moses' New Employee Training Program

### **Created to Respond:**

July 9—Heart (emotions)

July 16—Soul

July 23—Mind

July 30—Strength

August 6—Love Your Neighbor

*...continued from cover*

their church, families, and community. I am happy to have a preschool in the building so that we can hear the giggles and joy of children every day. I have also already found an abundance of coffee options too.

5. What is the hardest part of being a pastor? I have a gift of empathy. It is hard to see people hurting. Whether they are hurt by friends, family, the church, or the world, it is hard for me to see their pain. But, it is also an honor to be able to pray with them or for them when they do not have the words to say. It is also hard when church people just "disappear." When we don't know why they have stopped participating in the life of the church and we try to reach out and get no answers. We pray for them too, and know that sometimes in life paths will cross, be parallel, or go off in different directions. But it's still hard.

6. What was the last show you binged? Shrinking on Apple TV

7. Dog or cat? I have a dog, Betsy and a cat, Abby and they are watching me type this right now so I won't choose.

8. What are your strengths? Communication, Connectedness, Developer, Strategic and Woo

9. What do you like to do for fun? I like to go hiking. I like reading, crafting, traveling, and baking. I like to visit coffee shops, book stores, and state capitols.

10. Tell us about your husband. My husband, Robert or Rob and I have been married for 21 years. We met in college. He was born and raised in Memphis, TN. He graduated from The University of Tennessee Health Science Center (Memphis). He is an only child. He enjoys gaming, podcasts, barbecuing, cooking, and traveling. He is an endocrinologist with Richmond Diabetes and Endocrinology. His favorite color is black.

Well, I hope this helped you to get to know me a bit. When you see me, introduce yourself and feel free to ask me more questions. I am holding you all in prayer. I look forward to our life paths being parallel as we serve the kingdom of God together.

Pastor Sarah



River Road UMC is taking over an entire mini golf course (and pavilion) at Patterson Golf Park.

Come for unlimited play and loads of fun. All ages are welcome!

Cost: \$5 per person payable to RRUMC (cash, check, & online payments accepted)

Click here to sign up: [Mini Golf Sign Up](#)

**River of Lifers (adults 50+)**

Our Summer Lunch Series continues with a Mexican food adventure!

Meet up for lunch and fellowship:

Tuesday, July 18 at 11:30am

**Los Panchos Mexican Restaurant**  
1517 N. Parham Road (beside Fresh Market)

RSVP to Lori Alford by Sunday, July 16  
[engagement@riverroadumc.org](mailto:engagement@riverroadumc.org) or 740-7061

**STELLAR**  
SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
July 10-14, 9am-12pm

Register online by [clicking here.](#)

# YOUTH

All Youth in grades 6-12 welcome for Wednesday morning mission service time. Friends are always welcome as well. Shalom Farms, VBS, Marine Corps Museum and Goochland Cares are all on schedule for July!

Contact [youth@riverroadumc.org](mailto:youth@riverroadumc.org) for our full summer schedule.



Journey Mission  
Furniture  
Sorting



Barn Party



Confirmation 2023

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

### Preschool Discipleship for July:

We have been talking A LOT about how Jesus wants to be our friend forever. It is THAT important! Jesus is a gift for everyone, everywhere. And we want preschoolers to know they can move here, there, and everywhere telling people that Jesus, God's Son, wants to be their friend forever. And when we are friends with Jesus, He helps us love others in the same way He loves us. And that is worth going here, there, and everywhere so that everyone can be with Jesus...forever.



### Memory Verse for July:

“WALK IN THE WAY OF LOVE, JUST AS CHRIST LOVED US.”

EPHESIANS 5:2, NIV

### K-5 Discipleship for July:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Since the beginning, God has always been deeply involved in the world. We see God's handiwork on display in creation. We see God's love on display through Jesus, who came to rescue us. We respond to God in faith, believing in what we can't see because of what we can see. When we focus on what we know to be true about God and the world God created, we can have faith in what we can't see or fully understand. We put that faith into action as we follow Jesus and show His love to the world.

### Memory Verse For July:

“GOD'S GRACE HAS SAVED YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST. YOUR SALVATION DOESN'T COME FROM ANYTHING YOU DO. IT IS GOD'S GIFT.”

EPHESIANS 2:8, NIRV

## Adult Discipleship

Interested in an in-depth study of the Bible? Forming up new study groups for the fall for either 12 or 34 week immersions into the Bible. Let Tom York ([tom@riverroadumc.org](mailto:tom@riverroadumc.org)) know if interested!

During the summer, River Road UMC will have three Adult Discipleship Groups. All are welcome to join.

Contemporary Christian Class. Meets Sunday Morning at 10:00 in Rm 205/207 and via zoom. Led by Randy Reaves, this is a book study on topics of the day. Currently, the class is studying *Words of Life: Jesus and the Promise of the Ten Commandments*, by Adam Hamilton.

Adult Bible Study. Meets Sunday Morning at 10:00 in Rm 206. Led by Jon Francisco, this class focuses on a weekly, stand-alone bible study. Video and reading materials provided from the United Methodist Church Adult Bible Study Curriculum.

Prayer and Listening Study. Meets Monday Morning at 10:00 in Rm 205/207. Led by Lori Alford, this group studies the bible and related devotionals in support of a deeper understanding of faith.

**FRANCES ALLEN/ALICE WEED CIRCLE**

We hope everyone is enjoying their summer.

Mark your calendars for our next Circle meeting on September 12th at 10:00 am.



United  
Women  
in Faith

**BOOK CLUBS**

The first Monday Book Club meets at 7PM, 2800 Chancel Lane, home of Ann York, 907-748-0446. Call Ann if you want to be on the e-mail list for club reminders. On July 3 we will discuss Rhapsody by Mitchell James Kaplan, historical fiction about George Gershwin, and on Aug 7, The Twist of a Knife by Anthony Horowitz, a mystery. In September we will discuss Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver.

The Second Monday Book Club will meet on July 10. Brenda will lead our discussion on Lessons in Chemistry, written by Bonnie Garmus.

Your presence is always welcomed, along with critiques of our novel selection. We will start at 1:00 pm at 11129 Woodbaron Ct.

## **July Birthdays**

**July 1**

Sterling Dameron

**July 2**

Conley Kemp

**July 3**Connie Whetstone  
Blair McLarin**July 4**

Julia Messer

**July 6**

Mark Forberg

**July 9**Mandy McLarin  
Joanna Thompson**July 10**Robin Ely  
Ashley Barrett**July 11**

Ann Hodges

**July 13**Horace Payne Jr.  
Courtney Barrack**July 14**Mike Cosby  
Josh Busscher**July 16**

Debby Waters

**July 18**Brenda Vaughan  
Kim Cosby  
Steven Ebert**July 19**Fay Seay  
Alicia Hotinger  
Ruben Blevins**July 20**

Stacie Cornett

**July 21**

Greg Bowles

**July 23**

Pearcy Flippen

**July 24**

Martha Mullen

**July 25**

Katie Ely

**July 26**Beth Wilson  
Mary York  
Ashlyn Cosby**July 28**Jaimey Honea  
Elizabeth York  
Ryan Stuckey  
Trey Gayne**July 31**

Trent Keith



**THANK YOU!**

Our deepest gratitude to Tony and Jean Barnette who have so ably led the food pantry mission in recent years. Under their leadership, the operation expanded during the pandemic to support additional sites including St. Paul's, Belmont and Safe Harbor, as well as Little Hands. In addition, Tony and Jean organized the process so that we are able to meet the most urgent needs of the organizations more effectively. We, and those served by these organizations, have been greatly blessed by their commitment to service.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat . . . “ Matthew 25:35 (NIV)

**ONGOING NEEDS - FOOD PANTRIES AND SAFE HARBOR**

Our food pantry partners are seeing record numbers almost every week. We are delighted that Daniel O'Neill has stepped up to lead the food pantry ministry.

Most-needed items remain the same -peanut butter; 15 oz. cans of tomato sauce; 1 lb. spaghetti; canned fruit and vegetables; canned soups and beans; canned chicken and tuna; boxed cereal; oatmeal; ravioli/spaghettios; non-refrigerated microwave meals; diapers and wipes (sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most needed). Standard, non-glass container sizes are appreciated for packing purposes. Watch the app, as well as email, for weekly updates that highlight particular needs.

**UMCOR HYGIENE KITS**

Our church, including Missions Committee members and United Women in Faith, donated a total of 40 UMCOR hygiene kits as a part of the Annual Conference drive.

**LITTLE HANDS**

Mark and Charlotte Allred dropped off at Little Hands three large bags of blankets created by Project Linus crafters and collected by JO-ANN Fabrics, where their granddaughter works.

**UPCOMING MISSIONS**

We will begin collecting for the Eva Huston Pantry Christmas donations later this summer. We hope to collect funds to purchase food for the orphanages in Liberia, both to support businesses in the country and avoid shipping costs. Watch for more information coming soon.

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Hebrews 13:16.

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



RIVER ROAD  
UNITED METHODIST  
LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

8800 River Road  
Henrico VA 23229  
Phone: 804-740-7061  
Fax: 804-740-3367  
Preschool: 754-0227

July 2023

Articles for the  
August 2023  
Connections are due  
July 20, 2023.



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

# Meet our new Pastor

Meet our new pastor, Sarah Sealand! Drop by the Welcome Center on Sunday, July 2 from 10:00-10:30 or 12:00-12:30 to say hello to Sarah and Robert. Refreshments will be served.



On the last day of chapel in the Preschool, children were able to give Pastor Darcey a loving send off. During this special chapel, the children presented Pastor Darcey with cards they had made and lots of hugs. She was also given a special handmade (with love) canvas of all the children & staff's prints to make a dandelion. It said "You have a planted a seed that will grow in us forever". We are all so grateful for her service to the OACP ministry!

Open Arms Summer Camp Programs also began in June! This summer we are focusing on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math) throughout these weekly camps! The children are exploring all areas of STEAM and having special visitors throughout the summer too!

OACP is in open registration for the 2023-2024 school year. OACP is also hiring for a Full-Time Assistant Teacher beginning September 2023. If you, or any of your family and friends are interested in the open position or in enrolling a child at OACP, please contact the Preschool Director, Nora Hamlet at, at 804-754-0227 or email her at [openarms@riverroadumc.org](mailto:openarms@riverroadumc.org).



**OPEN ARMS**  
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

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