

2023
CANDIDATES
for
LAY LEADERSHIP



THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

trcnyc.org/LayLeadership

Lay Leadership is the heartbeat of The Riverside Church.

As a congregational church the various commissions and committees lead the way as we aspire to embody the love and justice of God in our neighborhood, across the nation, and around the world.

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LAY LEADER CANDIDATE FORUM

Sunday, April 30 | 1:00 pm ET | South Hall & Zoom

2023 ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, May 21 | after worship | South Hall & Online



CLARENCE ANDERSON

Biography:

A native New Yorker who was educated in NYC public schools and the City University of New York, Mr. Anderson spent 40 year in commercial banking at National Bank of North America, National Westminster Bank, Fleet Boston and Bank of America. He retired as Vice President.

During his financial services career, he was a community activist working with numerous not for profit agencies. He is a member of Joppa Lodge, Prince Hall Masons. Mr. Anderson was honored as a Black Achiever in Industry by the Harlem YMCA and received commendations for his service to the community. At Riverside he has been a member for over 40 years and served on Budget and Planning Committee, Nominating Committee, Stewardship Committee, Church Council, Sustainability

Committee, Finance Committee and Treasurer. Presently he is Church Council Chair.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

For me being engaged means participating fully in the life of the church and working with others in a positive way. Listening to others and understanding that we are all imperfect beings is a key to helping us become the Beloved Community. I also feel that sacrificial giving is important, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

I believe Worship is necessary for our Spiritual Growth and attendance in person and online helps us to strengthen our faith in God and develop a loving relationship with others.



LISA HINDS

Biography:

Lisa Hinds (she/her/hers) joined the Riverside Church in 1999. Since 2012, she has served as deacon and trustee as a two-term member of the Church Council and has held leadership positions on various commissions, committees, and task forces. In response to a collective call for mission-related investing, she authored and executed “Justice Based Investing,” which provides a framework for the integration of justice in a balanced portfolio. Her signature stewardship address “What if Jesus had a really good banker?”

Professionally, Lisa leads the endowment and foundation channel for EnTrust Global, an alternative asset manager. She previously led corporate development and client portfolio management for a distressed securities hedge fund and a private equity firm

focused on sustainable investing. A native New Yorker, Lisa has served in senior relationship management, institutional trading, and investment management capacities at Morgan Stanley, Standard and Poor’s, Bear Stearns, and GE Capital.

Lisa currently serves as board vice chair and investment committee chair of the United Church Funds, the institutional investment ministry of the national churches of the United Church of Christ. She is a co-author of the book *Faithful Investing: The Power of Decisive Action and Incremental Change* (Church Publishing Incorporated, 2019). In 2020, Lisa was elected to the board of trustees of the Altman Foundation, a philanthropic foundation serving New York City. Lisa holds an MBA from the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University, an MA in law and diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, and a BS from Northeastern University. She is a proud ‘Goalie Mom,’ road tripping nationally for girls’ lacrosse.



ERNEST JONES

Biography:

In my 38 years at Riverside I have served on 5 different organizations, the Greeters Ministry, Membership Care and Parish Life, Mission and Social Justice, The Racial Justice Initiative, and the Common Table. I was responsible for reviving the Greeters Ministry. My professional life has been devoted to promoting equality for all members of the population in areas of education, employment, housing, and public accommodation. These efforts were undertaken under the authority of local, state and federal governments and within private corporations. I was the founder of the US Coast Guards program for developing and recruiting officers at HBCU. I am the author of two novels depicting a journey from a legally segregated society to a law enforced integrated society.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Membership at Riverside has provided the opportunity to work cooperatively with others to tackle the obstacles society has placed on those needing support to achieve the dignity promised by the words of the God we serve.

My desire is to be a catalyst for promoting the recognition that each of us is a disciple looking to achieve the mission God had set for Riverside Church. We have been brought together to demonstrate the gift of harmony in achieving God's will. I am committed to that goal.



CHRISTIAN ROJAS

Biography:

I served on Church Council in 2015-2016 and 2018-2021. During part of that time, I chaired the Building Committee. I have also been on the Personnel and Salary Committee and the Investments Committee.

As a professor at Barnard College, I teach and do research in organic chemistry. I have served in leadership positions at the department and college levels and am committed to collaborative decision making.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

This May it will have been 101 years since Harry Emerson Fosdick asked, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" With this question as relevant as ever, I want to work toward creating a community at Riverside Church that provides a brightly shining example of the "intellectually hospitable, tolerant, liberty-loving church" that Fosdick advocated—a community strong in spirit and action, centered on Jesus' radical message of love for God, neighbor, stranger, and enemy.



LEE SARTAIN

Biography:

Lee Sartain has been engaged at Riverside since 2015, and served on the Senior Minister Search Committee, Stewardship Committee, and the Real Estate Assessment Subcommittee of the RDC, in addition to working with young adults at the Riverside Church.

Lee spent 15 years in senior leadership at North Carolina State University and Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University. During that time, he also served as a commissioned pastor of a new worshiping community, East Raleigh Fellowship, as well as in interim ministry at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, both in Raleigh, NC. Lee has served on the board of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists.

As a seminary student, he served as a consultant on a Lilly Endowment funded initiative focused on congregational vitality and financial wellness with the Episcopal Church Foundation. Currently, he runs his own real estate and vacation rental business and continues his ministry passions through personal financial wellness consulting. Lee brings his years of seminary education and experience as well as a unique perspective on what it means to be a minister. Lee holds degrees in religious studies from North Carolina State University and social ethics from Union Theological Seminary and is currently completing a degree in finance at Harvard University.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

For Lee, Riverside is where it all comes together spiritually for him. We are progressive, but not afraid to actually talk about Jesus. We care about the diversity of God's family, not because we want to be diverse, but because we are. Lee strives to be "what you see is what you get," and that his desire for Riverside is to help her live in the tension between who we say we are and who we actually are.



HENRY WILLIAMS

Biography:

A Member of TRC since 1994. Retired since 2004 from NYC Health and Hospital Corporation. In my free time I enjoy going to Broadway theaters, musical concerts, world travel, and visiting museums. My hobbies include coin collecting, photography, and reading and studying world history and reading the Bible. I have served on the following commissions: Parish Life x2, Worship Commission, Social Justice Commission, Stewardship x2, Institutional Relations, Sharing Fund Committee, RDC, Food Pantry New Members intake, archives, greeter, Shower project, and clothing project.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Being a member of TRC has enriched my life spiritually, given my life more purpose and meaning, a sense of belonging to a community of faith that is doing what Scripture wants us to do (Matthew 25:31-42). I feel blessed to be a part of this community of faith and with my blessing I am able to bless someone too so that nothing goes back to God empty handed. And let the Church say, "Amen"



DEBRA LILLY

Biography:

I am a parent of two adult children and a grandmother of 5. When I moved from Houston in the late sixties I searched for a home church that was diverse & accepting of all & I found that and more at The Riverside Church. My passion then and now has been my involvement in Children and Youth Ministries. Riverside was the village that helped me raise my two children; From nursery, through Sunday school, all the choirs until HS, the ministry was instrumental in shaping our lives. Now three of my grandchildren have the privilege of being taught by some of the same teachers that taught their mother. I have served as a parent liaison to the Education Commission but this is my first time seeking to run for election. The time is ripe to give back more and I am ready to serve.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

When I think of an answer to this question I am reminded of the phrase we use to teach our young people which is 'sharing is caring'. Riverside has always embodied this motto in its various ministries and has been the constant for me in spite of the internal controversies we have survived over the years. A church ministry needs the involvement of ALL God's people to thrive. Listening to others and recognizing there is more than one way to reach a mutual goal is a key part to being an engaging participant in The Riverside Community as well as a welcoming smile to all who enter. As I have been the recipient to the gifts of Riverside due to the hard work of the volunteers and committed leaders, the time is now to bestow those gifts to this new generation of the church.



BRIAN O'DELL

Biography:

In 1997, I felt God's call to join The Riverside Church (TRC): the "Emancipation from Poverty" new members' class. Elected to the Education Commission in 2002, serving for five years. Appointed member of Rev. Dr. Forbes Special Task Force on Youth & Young Adults (2003-2005), under the direction of Rev. Mariah Britton. Member of the Adult Christian Education Committee 1998-2016. Facilitator of over 25 TRC small groups, including "Listening for God in Contemporary Literature," "7 Deadly Sins in Contemporary Short Stories," "Reading the Bible from the Margins: Liberation Theology 101," and "Dinner with Jesus: Food, Hospitality and the Heavenly Banquet" Creator of TRC's curriculum "Being the Beloved Community: The Challenge of Wealth and Poverty".

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Realizing that "Once a Riverside member, you - can! - remain a Riverside member." When members move away from the Metro-NYC area because of college, job, obligation to sick parents... or as I did because of the need for low-cost, accessible housing (after my Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis), we shouldn't feel we need to find a new church home. I know it's possible for "old" and new members of TRC to be active in our ministries. Yes, I agree that there's nothing better than physically holding hands for small group prayer, or when we sing "Blessed be the ties that bind" during worship. But that 'loss' can be made up with participating in the life of this church virtually, once we realize that like-minded sisters and brothers are found not only across the United States, but around the world.



ROBERT "MARK" WALLACE

Biography:

I've been a member off and on for many years but a lot off. Coming back is a recent but conscious decision. The fundamentalist church that I was attending was missing the point on too many things, the need for good stewardship of the last environment that the Lord will ever give us, the need to treat needy people as equals, not lesser people. I have been a leader in other churches but Riverside is very different. I knew that Riverside was a very special place after I had a small talk with someone else who was also getting married later this year and the fact that I was marrying a woman and he was marrying another man didn't seem odd. We were both excited, both apprehensive, both hopeful. We need to make the world like that. Riverside can facilitate change in American society.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Let's get something out in the open. Riverside needs to move away from it's "blood on the floor meetings" reputation. We need to become a "Beacon of Truth. Being an engaged member means working to forge consensus, Promoting Christian "person hood" (formerly brotherhood until I got enlightened). Being an engaged member means more reconciliation baked into Riverside's decisions, and working for understanding. When members get tired of the fighting they move on and Riverside is then a smaller, weaker voice. In our "wing nut" national political environment Riverside needs to be a place of shelter for new people. The new cyber world is forcing us to redefine what being engaged means. It's hard to define community with new methods to achieve old objectives but that is now our challenge.



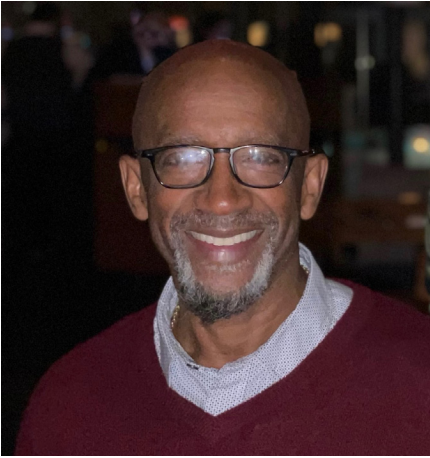
JULIAN WHARTON

Biography:

My name is Julian Wharton. I'm an eight year retiree bus operator and worked for the NY Transit Authority. I had been attending The Riverside Church for a few years prior to my becoming a member in January of 2020. After becoming a member, I became involved with Greeters Ministry, I am a member of Tower League, and one of the facilitators of Morning Prayer. Also, I volunteered for various events held at the church. I enjoy volunteering with The Freedom School program as well as a reader during the Harambee session.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

For me being engaged at The Riverside Church, is daily prayer and fellowship with others whom are also faith-based followers of Christ is meaningful to me. Having a study group to enhance my spiritual journey, and hearing the Word of God preached. Worshiping at TRC for me has become first and foremost an integral part of my daily spiritual journey. I'm proud to be a member of The Riverside Church that has met my thirst for the Gospel, and, has shown me what a faith community looks like since I've become a "prayer warrior" for Christ.



BRYANT HARRIS

Biography:

I worked for the NYCDOE as a high school Social Studies teacher and assistant principal for over 30 years, retiring in 2015. I enjoy teaching and continue to work part time as adjunct at Brooklyn College and supervisor in the Teaching Fellows Program. I'm also a mentor in the Executives on Campus mentoring program at Baruch College. The principles and values of The Riverside Church are those that I agree with in my inmost being. The diversity, friendliness, and openness to accept all of God's children.

Although I attended Riverside years before joining, I decided to become a member 2013. Since that time I have served two terms on the Education Commission. I also was on the Building Committee, Open Bible Study and I gladly serve whenever I can.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Riverside Church is a diverse and progressive community that encourages me to participate in its various church activities. There are many ways for me to engage with the activities and Ministries at Riverside. What works for me is finding a balance between home, work and church. Although I am happy to give and serve, sometimes I am unable to do so; however, Riverside provides many other opportunities for me to remain actively engaged in the church by giving and serving. As a result of these opportunities for me as well as the congregation, the church is an actively progressive church with a Christian spirit. I want to continue to be part of that spirit and its many progressive talents.



LAURA MIRAZ

Biography:

I was born in Uruguay and immigrated to the US as a young child with my family. I joined Riverside in 2022 and have extensive experience in church leadership. I have served on committees for worship, stewardship, education and nomination. I served on the board of directors of ABCMNY and the General Board of ABCUSA, as well as the Board of Managers of MMBB. Presently, I am a member of the board of the Philadelphia Baptist Association and the board of trustees of the Berkeley School of Theology. I am the human resources director for The American Baptist Home Mission Societies. I am a graduate of Barnard College and hold Masters in human genetics, public health and religious studies. My Ph.D. is on organization and leadership. I love NY museums, biking and Star Trek!

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I joined Riverside because its mission, vision and values are compatible with my own. As a member of the body of Christ I embrace the call to discipleship; and as a member of Riverside, I am committed to contributing my God-given gifts and graces in service, leadership and financial support. Being a member of this community calls and compels me to action. I am not new to 'church politics' and lay leadership. In fact, I see our diversity as a blessing and part of our strength. It requires us to continue to come together and collaborate. I, for one, want to be part of the lay leadership that works toward our growth. I consider it a blessing to be part of the Riverside community and hope to bring my experience and passion for ministry to my service as a lay leader.



AIDA MONTERO

Biography:

I am a retired NYC elementary school principal.

My engagement in the life of the community at Riverside began in 2012 when I volunteered to cook meals for the Coming Home Program. I took a leap of faith moving from the kitchen to becoming a mentor to formerly incarcerated men who were returning home. I mentored for 3 years until the program ended. I still keep in touch with the men under my care.

My last commission assignment was with MSJ serving a three year term where I focused at the time on ending stop and frisk. I also became engaged in actions with the Poor People's Campaign.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I believe that following the Carpenter by accepting my assignment to love one another means I show up as Brian Stevenson says, "In proximity to the disinherited." I am called to serve the poor, the hungry, and wherever I can ease the pain of others. In so doing I have discovered that I too am made whole.

I love Riverside, it has been my church home for over 25 years. A host of congregants and dedicated clergy have become my dear friends and companions in my faith walk. They continue to show me what it means to be a Christian.



JOCELYN PERRY

Biography:

Church Bio: Joined in February 2022

Current Focus: Morning Prayer Group and Virtual Coffee Hour

Professional and Life Experience: Certified Yoga Teacher, Accounting and Finance, Care Giver

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Living in a faith community is what Heaven calls it to be. A faith community aligned with the audacity of Hope, Compassion, and Truth as a member of Riverside Church we can continue to practice Christ's calling on our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls.

One of my scripture favorites is Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law."







DERRICK BINEY-AMISSAH

Biography:

I became a Riverside Church member in the summer of 2005 after attending services for about five years.

I've participated in the Education Ministry as a teacher in the Sunday School, the Prison Ministry as a mentor in the Coming Home Program, served as a mentor in the Rites of Passage youth Program, served as an appointed member of a Church Council focused on establishing a disciplined, transparent, and accessible approach to annual budgets, operating in an innovative, consistent, open manner as a mutually respectful collective in great solidarity with Church operations and administration.

I am at the end of a term as Vice Chair on the MSJ Commission, where the Commission has centered on internal MSJ operations, collaborations, and working more deeply on fewer areas of focus.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

The two themes that would best characterize my time at the Church since becoming a member have been the importance of embracing the unique responsibility that comes with being a member of congregational church and the idea lifted up to my membership class by Rev. Dr. Forbes that the lines of the cross intersect at the place where our faith in the grace, power, and Love of Christ meets with how we respond to and conduct ourselves in the secular world.

Being a member of the Riverside church community means treating the Church as a home... to everyone, and treating everyone like family. It is a context I do my best to take into other areas of my life, but an ongoing aspect of worship and participation at Riverside is building up that capacity.



PAMELA DAVIS

Biography:

Ed.D. Instructional Media and Technology from Columbia University with professional experience that meets at the intersection of technology and teaching.

Former Elected School Board member, Veteran Public School teacher, with experience diagnosing and disrupting systemic inequalities using the tools of teaching at the micro and macro levels.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I became an engaged member of Riverside after decades of visiting on random Sundays and attending community programs. In 2017 I attended on the Sunday of my one year "cancerversary" with the intention to say a prayer of gratitude and was stirred to engage more actively than I expected. I started coming every Sunday, then more than once a week and I joined 6 months later. Being an engaged member of Riverside means fellowship in Christian worship. I've joined in the work of ministries like the Freedom School and attended member based and community based programming. As a member I also engaged my passion when Wellbotics became a MSJ ministry. I have also made friends beyond worship.



ARELIS FIGUEROA

Biography:

I am a local Pastor, an activist, and a community organizer. I have more than 20 years of experience working with poor and marginalized communities both in the USA and abroad.

I currently work as a faith organizer at the Kairos Center for Religious Right and Social Justice and at the Dominican Women Development Center as a language access and Popular Educator. I am a member of NYS Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for A Moral Revival.

I hold a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary and certification on Popular Education and Community Organizing. I am the lead pastor at La Iglesia

del Pueblo, a new hybrid worshipping community launch in 2020 under the Kairos Center. I joined Riverside in 1992, I am currently one of the coordinators of the Latinx Ministry.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Being an engaged member of the Riverside church to me means to share with the church our talent, treasure and time, doing our part to fulfill, through our participation in the different ministries, committees and programs, the mission and vision of our church, which seeks to serve God through word and witness.



JANETTE KEMP

Biography:

I am an unsung pioneer! I am a first of Black migrationist to pave the way to enter rooms that were closed to those who looked like me. I am a mother to Shawana and a grandmother to Zachary, I am a daughter of a sharecropper's granddaughter, who migrated to New York City. I am the dream of her hopes and prayers. I am the recipient of a "first class" education receiving a full scholarship to a prestige secondary boarding school. I am her first child to graduate college. I am the first of many now. I am also a member of the Riverside Church. I served on the Stewardship committee, a member of the Tower League, was on the RDC Real Estate Assessment Subcommittee. Volunteer for Candlelight service, Clothing Bazaar, MSJ Get Out the Vote postcard campaign, Poor People's march in DC.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Success is not measured by what we have, but, how you make people feel. Love is not only romantic it is also service. Too many leave and disconnect, some stay and give back. A continuation of service to others is an ideal objective for Riverside church, I enjoy the fellowship at Riverside, participating in various events, sharing information, being an unofficial tour guide. Giving back improves health, releasing endorphins letting me know the "best is yet to come" providing excellent service to our church community.



DAVID KING

Biography:

My name is David King and I have been a member of the Riverside Church since April 2020, but have been attending Riverside since 1999. For many years I was a member of Sojourners and am currently on the Council. I am also Chair of the Beloved Earth Committee and a member of the Sharing Fund Committee and serve on the Building Committee.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Riverside Church has enabled me to rekindle my spirituality and my belief in God. My period on the Council has made me realize that, for me, my time and energies and life experiences will be better used doing social justice work and so I am running for the Mission and Social Justice Commission.



SUSAN WALCOTT

Biography:

I am a resident of Philadelphia, PA, having retired from a career as a healthcare professional both in long term and acute care facilities. I have held administrative roles in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania; and am an alumnus of the City University of New York and New York University, having earned a Master's Degree.

I attended St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Plainfield, New Jersey, and was very active in the life of the church serving on several committees and singing in the choir. I attended The Riverside Church briefly before moving to Augusta, Georgia. While in Georgia I attended St. Augustine Episcopal Church and served on their Anti-Racism Committee, volunteered with a program providing meals for residents in need, was a member of the Altar Guild, and sang with the choir.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I believe that we are required, as followers of Christ, to be engaged members of the congregation, and to support each other in sustaining our faith. I have seen my faith strengthened and been truly blessed by the fellowship and spiritual nurturing I have received from my involvement in the many ministries of the Riverside Church in the past two years. The community that I have shared with my Morning Prayer group; the Bible Study and the many activities of the Lenten season have demonstrated that God's word is truly at work in the church.



ALEXA DONAPHIN

Biography:

Since joining Riverside in the late 1990's, I've served on the Mission & Social Justice Commission, the Building Committee, the Church Council (both as vice chair and chair), and as a member of the most recent Senior Minister Search Committee. I've been on many Riverside committees and participated in numerous church activities and initiatives. I've volunteered with the Sojourners Ministry, the Freedom School, the Poor People's Campaign, Lift Every Voice and Vote, and the Anti-Racism Task Force. In addition, I've served on the Riverside Development Committee and its site assessment subcommittee. In 2021, I was elected to the Worship Commission, and am currently the commission representative to the Budget & Planning Committee. I've also been a Church School teacher for over 22 years.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

For me, engagement as a member of this or any other community of faith means active participation in sustaining its life and promoting its mission. James 2:14-26 tells us that "faith without works is dead". As followers of Christ, we are called to work as well as to worship.



KARISSA GARNER

Biography:

Karissa became a member of the Riverside Church in 2016 while attending classes at New York Theological Seminary. During her time at Riverside, she became involved in Conversation Partners as an English-speaking partner and later interned at the Shower Project and the pantry.

Karissa is a former employee of the New York City Human Resources Administration. Karissa has also conducted research for the Association of Theological Schools and completed an internship at the New Jewish Home in the field of chaplaincy.

Karissa holds an MDiv from New York Theological Seminary and a BS in business from the University of Phoenix. She recently completed an IT certification in Python coding.

Born in Brooklyn, Karissa now lives in Harlem with her 15-year-old son Isaac. She is a member of the PTA at her son's school. Karissa enjoys engaging in student advocacy. She is also active in speaking out for underserved families. While Karissa spends most of her time with her family and pets, she also loves cooking, baking, and learning new things.



DAVID VAUGHN

Biography:

David Vaughn has been a member of the Riverside Church since 1996. Upon becoming a member, he immediately joined the Inspirational Choir, where, in addition to singing, he now serves as librarian. He has served on the church's committees for Nominating, Institutional Relations (chair), and Music (chair) and is currently on the committees for Worship and Ordination. David has also been Riverside's representative to the board of directors of the American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York, where he now serves as treasurer.

David graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a BA in history. During his studies, much of his energies were spent in the performing arts department, which led to a career in theater. Mr. Vaughn has worked on Broadway as theatre manager of the Minskoff Theatre, the Brooks Atkinson Theatre, and the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre. He served as director of operations for New York's Public Theatre and for the Nederlander Producing Company of America, overseeing its New York operations.

David has a deep and abiding love of music, the theater, and the arts. This led to the opportunity to perform with Rutgers's Presbyterian Church's Opera Group, raising funds for that church's homeless shelter program. He also enjoys astronomy, gemology, and model railroading.



MARK YIM

Biography:

I've been a member of the Riverside Church since 2004. Over the years, I've taught adult bible classes and volunteered in the church library and recently served on the Senior Minister Search Committee. I am currently on the Senior Minister Committee. My 14-year-old daughter Emi was brought up in the church nursery and Sunday school. I am a portfolio manager for GAMCO Investors in Rye, NY, having previously worked in a similar capacity in Chicago and Tokyo. I grew up in New Jersey, studied at Princeton and the University of Chicago, and now live with my husband Peter and our daughter in Upper Manhattan, where I am currently president of our residential co-op. I enjoy reading, playing the piano, swimming, and running my co-op's composting program as a NYBG-trained master composer!

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

It's a surprise to me that 20 years have passed since I joined Riverside. I'd like to think that 'engagement' means leaving the Church just a little bit better than how I found it, and being open to being transformed in the process. For me, becoming an engaged member of the Riverside church community has been a gradual process, related to what was going on in the rest of my life (e.g., raising a child) and on feeling ready to contribute. My 18 months on the Senior Minister Search Committee was a crash course in everything Riverside - history, governance, theology - and mostly, people. Riverside has extraordinary people, and I would be honored to become ever more engaged with this community, and with future members, as we make the Church an even better place for everyone.



ANDRE NAKASHIAN

Biography:

I am currently the Controller for a Long Island construction company named Gilbert, running the accounting department consisting of 3 accountants. I am also a tax preparer (known as an Enrolled Agent). In my previous experience (starting in 2010), I was the Assistant Controller for the Riverside Church for 6.5 years. I have a bachelors degree in accounting from Rutgers University (class of 1999).

I became a member at Riverside in 2019 and have been serving on the Budget & Planning committee since 2020, and am the committee's secretary. I am very familiar with the Church's budget and strongly believe the Church must continue to develop budgets that provide a sustainable plan for the future while focusing on its core competencies. .

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Riverside showed me that the teachings of Christianity are indeed compatible with a tolerant society based on love for all. There are many rooms in my Father's house and all are truly welcomed. Riverside is a path to faith that is relevant to today and I believe for the future. Being engaged to the community to me means finding common ground with those who differ from me and my beliefs.



JEAN SCHMIDT

Biography:

I am a partner in the law firm of Littler Mendelson specializing in employment law and litigation. My family and I have been members of Riverside since 1992. In addition to serving as Treasurer and Chair of Budget & Planning for Riverside in the past, I have served as the treasurer and on the finance and investment committees of other not for profit organizations, including my sorority's foundation and a childcare services agency. I also have served on the Board of Directors of my law firm.

Prior Riverside experience: Church Council, 2014-2019; Treasurer, Chair of Budget & Planning, 2006-2012; Chair, Vice Chair, Chair Budget & Planning, Chair Bylaws Committee, Riverside Development Committee Co-Chair - 2019-2023, Career Day; Greeters Ministry

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I have found a wonderful community of friends who have provided support, encouragement, joy, shared experiences, and endless learnings. I also have been given the opportunity to serve others and to learn and grow in so many ways - spiritually, professionally, personally. When people thank me for what I have done, I always say I have received so much more than I have given. And it has been so important, particularly over these past several years, to be part of a community that believes in the dignity of all and continues to strive for social justice. I strongly believe that we must make our voices heard and our actions speak loudly to the world to show what it truly means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. And being an engaged member of Riverside is a way to do that.



PAT ALI

Biography:

I joined Riverside Church in 1979. As soon as I had children I knew I wanted to raise them in a Church. Although I live downtown, Riverside was the diverse Church I wanted for our family. When my girls got a bit older I started teaching Church School - more than 30+ years now. Enabling children to develop their faith and love for our Lord Jesus Christ has been an immense blessing in my life. I served on the Senior Minister Committee when Pastor Amy was being called as Riverside's Senior Minister. I served on the Worship Commission for 6 years and was the Worship Commission's rep to the Nominating Committee. Thus my interest in running for a position on the Nominating Committee. I joined the Bookclub, enriching my life through reading and discussion.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I consider that being a member of Riverside and serving as Jesus taught us are inseparable. Riverside Church engages me in multiple ways - being in Church Service puts me in touch with the Holy Spirit and God three in One. Church School is totally engaging - I learn as much from the Children as I teach them. It is my special way of serving the Lord. The Worship Commission allowed me to understand and help plan for the future of our Church and its outreach to the world at large. I was amazed at the intense work of the Nominating Committee, identifying lay leaders to grace our Church. It was an honor to serve on the Nominating Committee and help with the lay leadership elections.



GLENESSE GORDON

Biography:

As a former member of the worship commission, I am familiar with the requirements and needs of the church to function and meet the needs of our members and community. As a leader in the diversity and inclusion community, I am adept at removing biases as I consider others for areas to contribute.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

I am a part of Riverside because I believe in the principles and mission of the church. I feel that a spiritual, socially conscious and diverse. I understand that there are different levels of engagement based on where a person is in their life. I have personally experienced different levels of engagement during my nearly 30 years of attending Riverside. Being engaged means that a person can fit into the area that works for them and that there are different opportunities for participation. Although most of us may expect that engaged members will participate in activities such as committees and volunteer in various activities a member may feel perfectly connected by only Sunday services.



BETH WYNNE-ST. LOUIS

Biography:

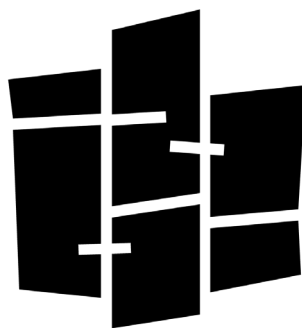
I joined Riverside in 1999 and have been a member of the Young Adult Ministry, Education Commission, Senior Minister Search Committee, and am currently chair of the Nominating Committee. I also volunteered with both the Children and Family Ministry and the Youth Ministry.

I hold a BA from the University of Notre Dame with a dual major in psychology and business and an MA in clinical psychology from the New School for Social Research. My career encompasses over 25 years in human resources with a focus on employee relations, organizational development, emotional intelligence, and conflict management.

I currently reside in NJ with my husband Harold, mom Alma, and teenagers, Jabari and Jelani. I am a proud boy scout and basketball mom.

What does being an engaged member of the Riverside church community mean to you?

Being engaged to me means being invested in the growth and survival of Riverside. It means supporting youth and seniors, supporting Lay Leadership and Clergy/Staff. It means loving Riverside with your whole heart and mind.



LAY LEADER CANDIDATE FORUM

Sunday, April 30 | 1:00 pm ET | South Hall & Zoom

2023 ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, May 21 | after worship | South Hall & Online