

# THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH

## IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: LOVE  
DECEMBER 24, 2023 | 11:00 AM

# WELCOME TO THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH

Interdenominational · Interracial · International · Open · Welcoming · Affirming

## **WORSHIP is at the center of the life of The Riverside Church.**

As you prepare your heart and mind for worship, consider this quote:

“I know, it gets hard y’all  
And that’s why we gotta take it to God y’all...  
You need a dose of that heavy love...  
You can’t move it, you can’t shake it  
You can’t beat it, you can’t take it  
It’s unchanging, heavy love  
It ain’t changing, heavy love  
So much power, so much patience  
It’s a love, so amazing  
It ain’t moving, heavy love  
It ain’t breaking, heavy love”

— Mali Music

## **A question for reflection:**

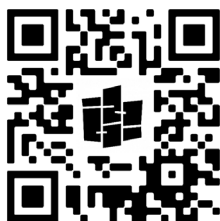
In what concrete ways would you like to be better at loving, as this old year becomes a new year?

### **What’s happening at Riverside?**

You can find a printed calendar listed in the back of your bulletin!

### **Give by your phone.**

Text TRCNYCGIVE to 833.833.4035



## **Cover art by Jamil De Honney.**

*Inspired by James 1:27.*

*We are on the Advent journey to Bethlehem tasked with living a religion that is true.  
This Advent IV, we focus on LOVE and the way in which the love of Christ makes us  
better at loving... loving God, others, and ourselves.*

*Riverside worship services are filmed, recorded, and broadcast online.  
If you do not want to appear in any videos or photos, we invite you to sit in the balcony.*





## GATHERING

*We gather as a community and prepare our hearts to worship God.*

### CARILLON

O Come All Ye Faithful  
Come All Ye Shepherds  
Este Ramito de Flores  
Gabriel's Message

arr. John Francis Wade  
arr. Ronald Barnes  
Skinner Chavez-Melo, arr. Carol Anne Taylor  
arr. Sally Slade Warner

Charles Semowich, *carillonneur*

### ORGAN

Prière à Notre Dame  
Adoration

Léon Boëllmann  
Florence Price

Alan Montgomery, *organist*

### LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

Rev. Lynn Casteel Harper

### CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup> *standing as able*

*One:* Siblings in Christ, come and celebrate the most powerful force on earth.

***All:* That power is love. Nothing can defeat it. No one can stop it.**

*One:* Come and behold the force calling us home, drawing us near to each other and to God.

***All:* That force is love: inescapable, unconditional, and tireless.**

*One:* Come and receive the gift of Jesus, Son of God, and incarnation of God's love for us.

***All:* We receive the gift of Jesus, God-made-flesh to dwell among us.**

*One:* Come, celebrate, behold, and receive. Let us worship together in Spirit and in truth.

***All:* Here we encounter the love that overcomes all fear, all evil, all isolation, and all shame. Let us worship in love!**

### INVOCATION *remain standing*

<sup>1</sup> © 2022 Illustrated Ministry

## PROCESSIONAL HYMN *remain standing, sung by all*

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

PICARDY



1. Let all mor-tal flesh keep si-lence, And with fear and trem-bling stand;  
2. Tru-ly God, yet born of Ma-ry, As of old on earth he stood,  
3. Rank on rank the host of hea-ven Spreads its van-guard on the way,  
4. At his feet the six-winged se-raph; Che-ru-bim with sleep-less eye,  
Pon-der noth-ing earth-ly mind-ed, For with bless-ing in his hand,  
Word of God, in hu-man ves-ture, in the bo-dy and the blood,  
As the Light of light de-scend-ing From the realms of end-less day,  
Veil their fa-ces to the Pre-sence, As with cease-less voice they cry,  
Christ our God to earth de-scend-eth, Our full ho-mage to de-mand.  
Christ will give to all the faith-ful His own self for heaven-ly food.  
That the powers of hell may va-nish As the dark-ness clears a-way.  
"Al-le-lu-ia, A-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, God most high!"

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES Dr. Marcella Bullmaster-Day and Mr. Dennis Day

### INTROIT

The Angel Gabriel

Basque Carol

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Amanda Meisenheimer

*In a moment of silence, offer your own prayers of confession.*

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

### ANTHEM

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Michael Praetorius

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming of Jesse's root has grown. A rose, by prophet's singing, to all the world made known. The rose, 'midst winter's cold, a lonely blossom bearing, in former days, foretold. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind. With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to man a Savior when half spent was the night. It came, a flow'ret bright amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.*

## LISTENING

*We listen* for the word of God through song, Scripture, and preaching.

### PSALTER SCRIPTURE READING

Annie Meredith

Psalms 113

*One:* The Word of God for the People of God.

***All:* Thanks be to God.**

### HYMN 10 *standing as able, sung by all*

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

WINCHESTER NEW

### GOSPEL SCRIPTURE READING

Multiple Readers<sup>2</sup>

Luke 1:5-13, [14-25], 57-80

*One:* The word of God for the People of God.

***All:* Thanks be to God.**

### SERMON

*Love: True Religion is Heavy*

Rev. Adriene Thorne

### MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

## RESPONDING

*We respond* to the hearing of God's word through prayer, passing the peace, offering, and monthly communion.

### PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Charlene Wingate

*We have heard the word of God read and proclaimed. Now let us pray together.*

*One:* The Lord be with you.

***All:* And with your spirit.**

*One:* Lift up your hearts.

***All:* We lift them up unto the Lord.**

<sup>2</sup> Gospel Scripture Readers: Karissa Garner, Bryant Harris, Dr. Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome, Dr. Muoyo Okome, David Orcutt, and David Vaughn

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**All:** Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.  
Save us from the time of trial, deliver us from evil.  
For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever.

## CHORAL AMEN

## PASSING OF THE PEACE *standing as able*

**One:** The peace of the Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

## INVITATION TO GIVE AND SERVE

Laura Miraz

## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

God So Loved the World

John Stainer

*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whoso believeth, believeth in him should not perish, should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world. But that the world through him might be saved.*

*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whoso believeth, believeth in him should not perish, should not perish but have everlasting life.*

## AT THE PRESENTATION: VENI EMMANUEL *standing as able, sung by all*

*The congregation rises row by row as ushers pass to symbolize the offering of our whole selves to God.*

**O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in its ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION** *remain standing* Min. Derrick T. Jordan

*Today we celebrate the ministry of our Welcome Center/Gift Shop, which offers hospitality to all – visitors, members, and staff, and provides items for sale that support the various programs and promote the general mission of our church and faith community.*

**RECESSIONAL HYMN 8** *remain standing, sung by all*  
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

TRURO

**BENEDICTION** *remain standing*

Rev. Adriene Thorne

**POSTLUDE**  
Fanfare

Arthur Wills

Alan Montgomery, *organist*

## TODAY AT RIVERSIDE

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

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Fresh Start	Online	8:30 AM
Open Bible Study	330 MLK & Online	9:30 AM
Courageous Conversations	South Hall	9:45 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	Nave & Online	11:00 AM
Coffee Hour	South Hall	After Service
Virtual Coffee Hour	Online	12:30 PM
Carillon Recital: Holiday Music		3:00 PM

## THIS WEEK AT RIVERSIDE

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

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*The Riverside Church will be closed in observance of Christmas Day.*

Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 AM
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### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

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Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 AM
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### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

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Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 AM
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### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

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Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 AM
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### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

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Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 AM
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## COMING SOON

<b>First Sunday Food Collection</b>	Sunday, January 7	All Day
<b>Practicing Sabbath</b>	Sunday, January 7	After Service
<b>Space for Grace</b>	Wednesday, January 10	7:00 PM
<b>Riverside Book Club</b>	Saturday, January 13	11:00 AM
<b>Joy Regardless Concert</b>	Sunday, January 14	5:00 PM
<b>Winter Sabbath Spiritual Retreat</b>	Friday-Sunday, January 19-21	All Day
<b>The Riverside Choir Benefit Cabaret</b>	Sunday, January 28	1:30 PM
<b>Beyoncé and the Hebrew Bible (Class #2)</b>	Wednesday, January 31	6:30 PM

## UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

### **Sunday, December 31, 2023**

Sunday Morning Worship | 11:00 AM | Nave & Online

New Year's Eve Watch Night Service | 11:00 PM | Nave & Online

### **Sunday, January 7, 2024**

Epiphany Sunday | 11:00 AM | Nave & Online

### **Sunday, January 14, 2024**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday | 11:00 AM | Nave & Online



Visit [trcnyc.org/LOC](https://trcnyc.org/LOC) or scan the QR code to find out more about all the programs and events happening in the life of our community.

## ABOUT RIVERSIDE

The Riverside Church is an interdenominational, interracial, international, open, welcoming, and affirming church and congregation. The church is a member of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. and the United Church of Christ. Riverside cooperates with the Council of Churches in the City of New York and with the New York State, National, and World Council of Churches. Whoever you are: You are safe here. You are loved here. You are invited into full participation in our life together.

Rev. Adriene Thorne, Senior Minister  
Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister Emeritus

### RIVERSIDE EMAIL LIST

Get the latest news and events at The Riverside Church from our weekly emails. Sign up at [trcnyc.org/email](http://trcnyc.org/email). If you're not receiving them, add [communications@trcnyc.org](mailto:communications@trcnyc.org) to your "Safe Sender list."

### MEMBERSHIP AT RIVERSIDE

Membership is about responding to God's call on your life to step up and belong to this community as you pursue the passion God has set in your heart. By joining The Riverside Church you are taking the next step to partner with us as we seek to cultivate a community of justice, peace, and love that transforms the world. Visit [trcnyc.org/membership](http://trcnyc.org/membership) to find out more.

### DOWNLOAD THE RIVERSIDE APP

Take Riverside with you wherever you go. Text TRCNyc to 833.833.4035 or visit [trcnyc.org/app](http://trcnyc.org/app) to download the app and stay connected to all the videos, podcasts, and events from The Riverside Church.

### SUNDAY AFTERNOON CARILLON RECITALS

These recitals take place most weeks at 3:00 PM and can be best heard outdoors listening from Sakura Park, immediately north of The Riverside Church at 122nd Street. Visit [trcnyc.org/carillonrecitals](http://trcnyc.org/carillonrecitals) for the complete schedule and programs.

### SUNDAY MORNING PARKING

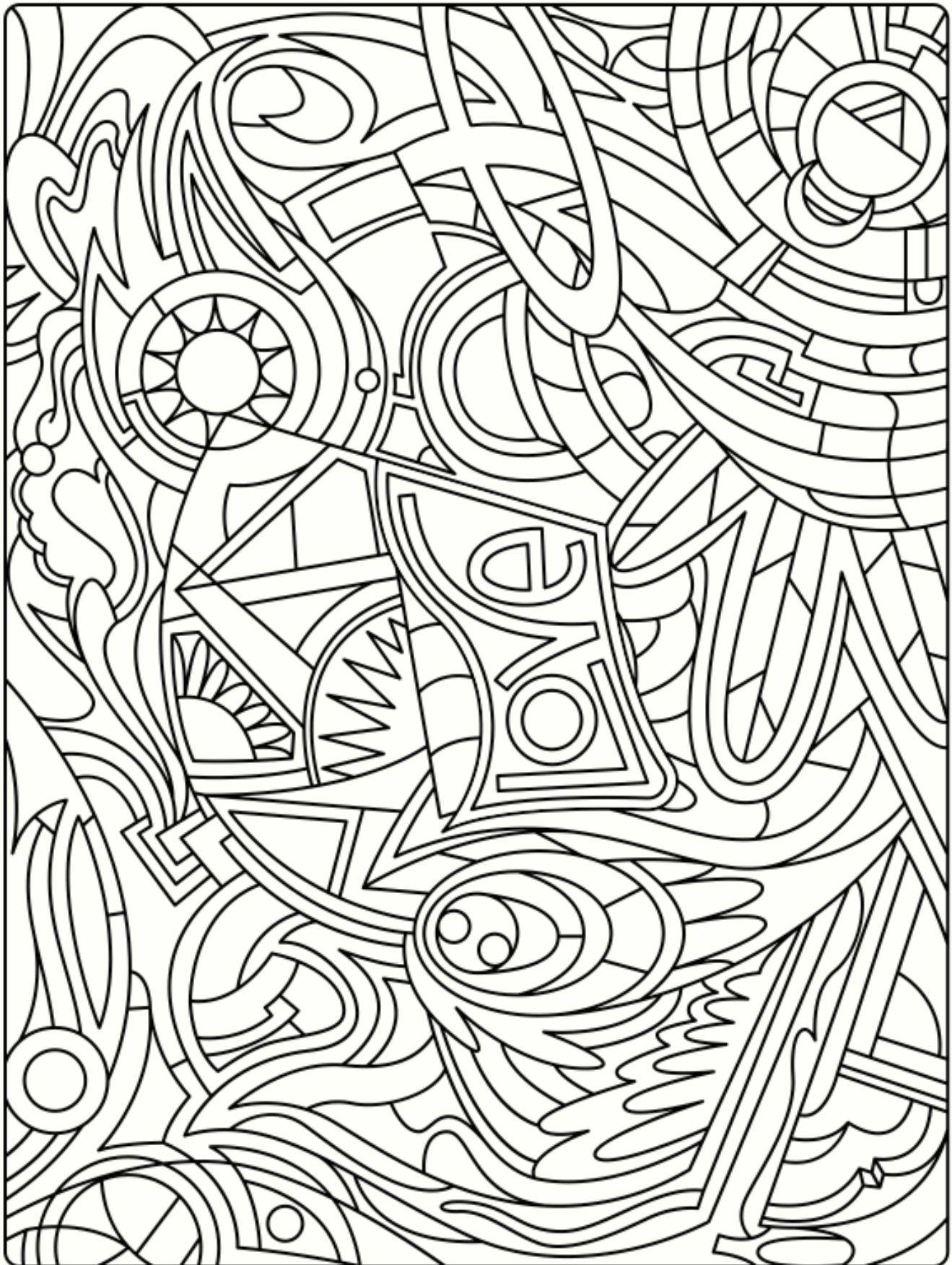
Visit the Security Desk on the Claremont Level to pick up a \$5 parking coupon. Bring this bulletin and your parking ticket to the attendant on the upper level to receive this discounted rate, pay, and pick up your car. This discounted rate applies to Sundays only.

### CHURCH NURSERY

Babies and toddlers are not too young to start learning about God's love for them. The nursery is open every Sunday from 10:30 AM-12:30 PM and is staffed by trained nursery workers. For location, please see an usher or security guard.

### VOLUNTEER AT RIVERSIDE

Riverside offers a variety of volunteer opportunities, from ushering to serving in our Communion and Greeters ministries, providing support in our Food Pantry and Clothing Distribution programs, to making a digital impact through our Digital Ministry, and so much more! Discover the joy of giving back, establish connections with those who share your passion and purpose, and make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve. Join Riverside's volunteer family and let your light shine in all the ways that matter. Visit [trcnyc.org/volunteer](http://trcnyc.org/volunteer) for more information.



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## CONNECT WITH US

### Rev. Adriene Thorne

Senior Minister

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### Pastoral Staff

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### CONTACT US:

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For full staff directory visit [trcnyc.org/  
directory](http://trcnyc.org/directory)



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