

THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 21, 2025 | 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:

“Hope is born again in the faces of children. It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets. Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things, Even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper. At first it is too soft. Then only half heard. We listen carefully as it gathers strength. We hear a sweetness. The word is Peace. It is loud now. It is louder. Louder than the explosion of bombs.”

– Maya Angelou

A question for reflection:

Why did God come to us as a child?

Connect With Us

Visit our [Welcome Page](#) to learn more



Give With Your Phone

Text TRCNYCGIVE to 833.833.4035



ASL Interpreters

Terrona Evans & M. Lisa Lockley

Cover art by Jamil De Honney

Assisted listening devices are available to anyone who needs them. Speak to an usher to secure one for service. They can be returned to any usher at the end of service.

*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

From Heaven Above (Vom Himmel Hoch)

Martin Luther, arr. Richard Giszczak

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (Gabriel's Message)

Trad. Basque Carol, arr. Giszczak

Angels, from the Realms of Glory (Regent Square)

Henry Smart, arr. Milford Myhre

Ven, Señor, a Nuestra Vida

Antonio Alcalde, arr. Carol Anne Taylor

Carla Staffaroni, carillonneur

STRINGS

O Holy Night

Angels We Have Heard on High

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

*Riverside Community String Ensemble
Kristina Giles, director*

LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

Rev. Tim Dalton

CALL TO WORSHIP

standing as able

Sara Pascarelli

One: Come from the wilderness, come from the field!

All: Make way to the stable, at manger we yield.

One: A starlight tears through the dark blanket of sky

All: The Word made flesh, God-with-us is nigh.

One: From dark womb of body, a child will be born:

All: A light to all nations; hope for the forlorn.

One: Receive Him, believe Him, all children of God

All: Change your life, change the world. Give glory, be awed! Let us worship God.

INVOCATION

standing as able

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 11

remain standing

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Liturgy adapted from Betsey Beckman's poem What Can be Done While Waiting.

Debra Lilly

Brandi Lilly McLean

Patrick McLean

Cuba, India, and Morocco McLean

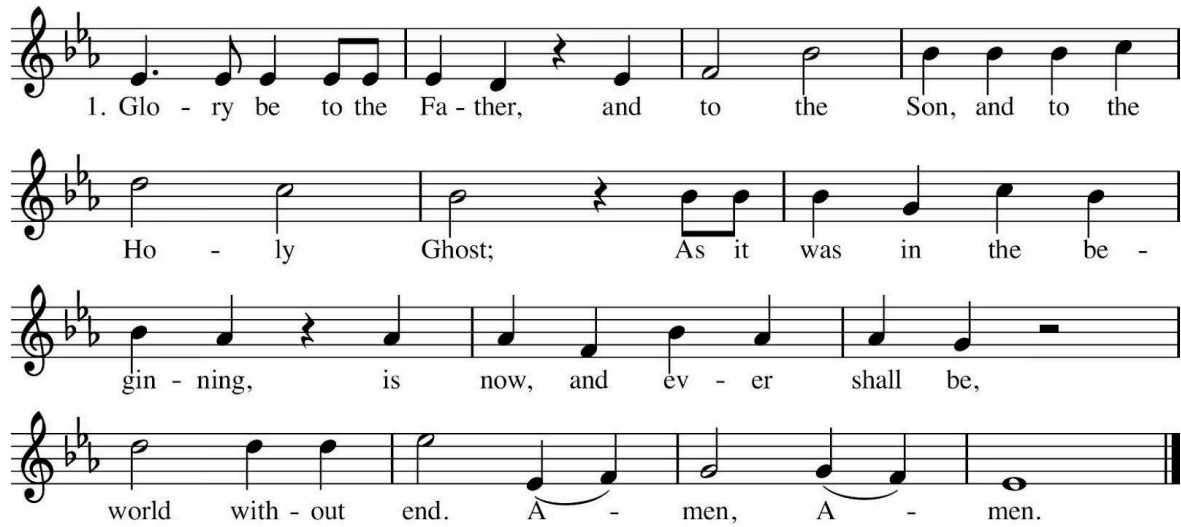
PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Charlene A. Wingate

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

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

GLORIA PATRI



1. Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the
Ho - ly Ghost; As it was in the be -
gin - ning, is now, and ev - er shall be,
world with - out end. A - men, A - men.

LISTENING

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

HEBREW BIBLE SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 130:5-8 (*Pew Bible page 574*)

Micah Niang

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

All: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-38; 46-56 (*Pew Bible page 56*)

Lukas De Leon, Alexandra Pascarelli

One: This is the Gospel of Christ.

All: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

Rev. Adriene Thorne

HYMN 16

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

standing as able

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

SERMON

When Jesus Was Born

The Riverside Church School

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

RESPONDING

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

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Adriene Thorne with Gioia Imperiale

One: The Lord be with you.

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

One: Lift up your hearts.

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pray in the language or version of your heart.

GIOIA:

**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

Rev. Adriene Thorne

One: The Peace of the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

INVITATION TO GIVE AND SERVE

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Magnificat in B-flat

C.V. Stanford

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For He hath regarded the lowliness of His hand-maiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. He remembering His mercy hath holpen His servant Israel, as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, forever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

AT THE PRESENTATION: VENI EMMANUEL *standing as able*

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

**All: 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 *standing as able*

Today, we celebrate the young voices of Riverside's Youth Choir, Cherub Choir, and Rising Voices, who share their beautiful ministry of music with the church and community.

SENDING

We are sent out into the world to love God and our neighbors.

CLOSING HYMN 20

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

remain standing

ABERYSTWYTH

BENEDICTION

remain standing

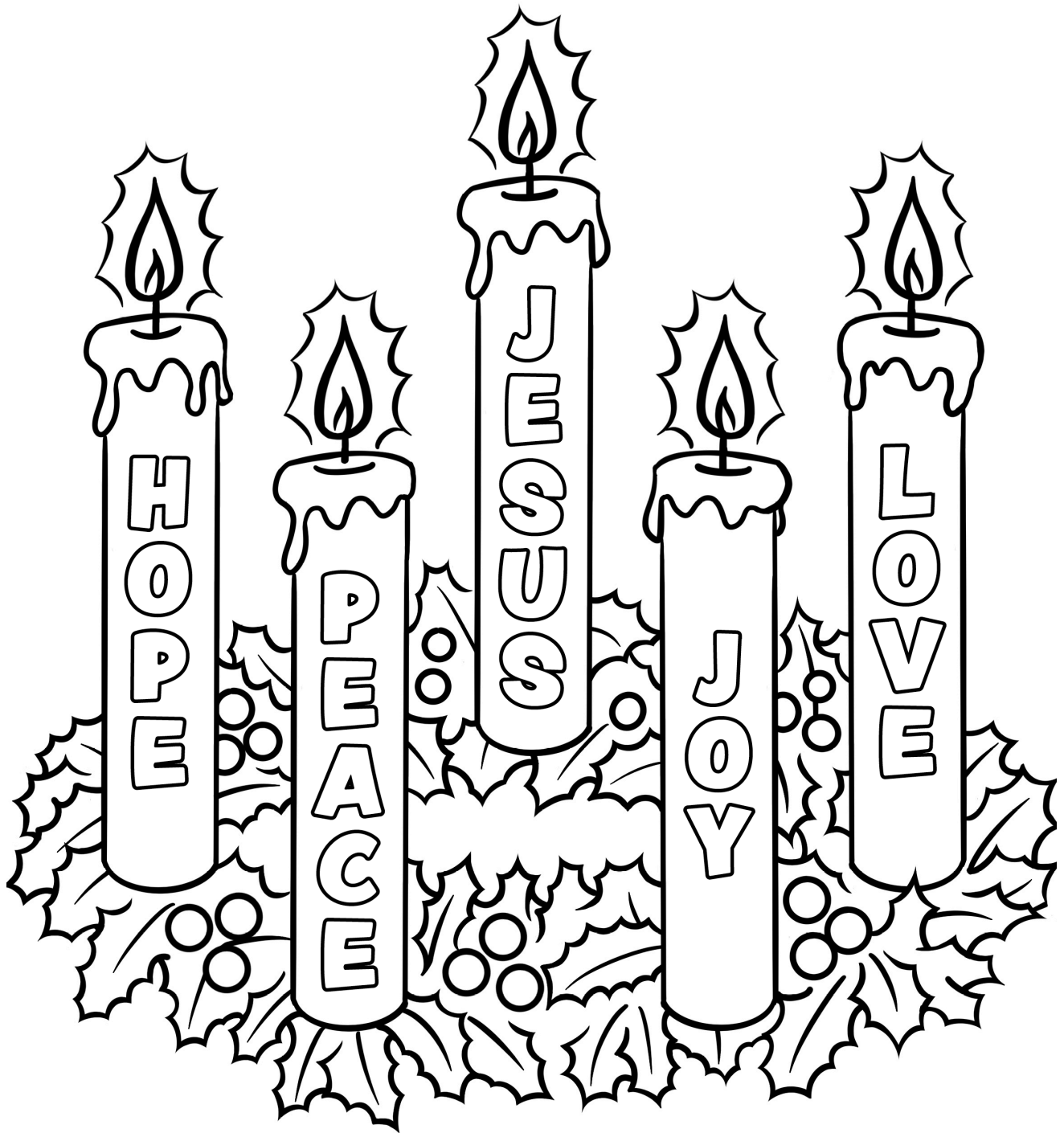
Dr. Jillian Langford
Rev. Jabe Ziino
Rev. Dr. Leah Fowler
Kai Fowler

POSTLUDE

Toccatà on Veni Emmanuel

Andrew Carter

Stephen Tharp, *organist*



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The people walking in
DARKNESS
have seen a
GREAT
LIGHT.

ISAIAH 9:2



TODAY AT RIVERSIDE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

Breakfast (<i>available for purchase</i>)	South Hall	8:30 am
Fresh Start	Online	8:30 am
Seekers Book Study	323 MLK & Online	9:00 am
Absolute Beginners Biblical Hebrew	314 MLK & Online	9:30 am
Open Bible Study	316 MLK & Online	9:30 am
ParentConnect	318 MLK & Online	10:00 am
Grace Space Nursery	See Usher or Security for Location	10:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	Nave & Online	11:00 am
Coffee Hour	South Hall Lobby	After Service
Virtual Coffee Hour	Online	After Service
Lunch (<i>available for purchase</i>)	South Hall	After Service
Advanced Biblical Hebrew	314 MLK & Online	1:00 pm
Women of the Bible	Meditation Chapel	1:00 pm
Pageant After-Party	9T	1:30 pm
Clara and the Nutcracker	9T	1:30 pm
Carillon Recital	Riverside Neighborhood	1:30 pm
Men's Class	Multipurpose Room	1:30 pm

THIS WEEK AT RIVERSIDE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 am
Art of Movement	411 MLK	10:00 am
Tower League Bible Study	Online	11:00 am
Multifaith Monday: Witness to Democracy	Columbus Circle	5:30 pm
North Star Bible Study	Online	6:00 pm

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 am
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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 am
Christmas Eve Service for Children & Families	Nave & Online	4:00 pm
Intermediate Beginners Biblical Hebrew	Online	5:30 pm
Afternoon Carillon Recital	Riverside Neighborhood	1:30 pm
Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols	Nave & Online	7:00 pm

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

Merry Christmas!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26

Morning Prayer	Online	8:00 am
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

Theatre of the Oppressed

Online

1:00 pm

COMING SOON

**New Year's Eve Watch
Night Service**

Wednesday, December 31

11:00 pm

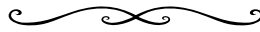


Visit trcnyc.org/LOC or scan the QR code to find out more about all the programs and events happening in the life of our community.

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



ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES & ASL INTERPRETATION

Assisted listening devices are available for those who need them, and ASL interpretation is provided on select Sundays. Please see an usher to request a device or to find the best seating for viewing the interpreters.

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

GRACE SPACE NURSERY

Babies and toddlers are not too young to start learning about God's love for them. The grace space 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.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CARILLON RECITALS

Recitals take place most weeks at 1:30 PM and can be best heard outdoors listening from Sakura Park, north of The Riverside Church at 122nd Street. Visit trcnyc.org/carillonrecitals for the complete schedule and programs.

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 to find out more.

VOLUNTEER AT RIVERSIDE

Riverside offers a variety of volunteer opportunities, from ushering to providing support in our social services programs, and so much more! Discover the joy of giving back, and make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve. Visit trcnyc.org/volunteer for more information.

RIVERSIDE EMAIL LIST

Get the latest news and events at The Riverside Church from our weekly emails. Sign up at trcnyc.org/email. Be sure to add communications@trcnyc.org to your "Safe Sender list."

DOWNLOAD THE RIVERSIDE APP

Take Riverside with you wherever you go. Text TRCNYC to 833.833.4035 or visit trcnyc.org/app to stay connected to all the videos, podcasts, and events from The Riverside Church.

PASTORAL TEAM AND MINISTERIAL STAFF



Rev. Adriene Thorne
Senior Minister



Rev. Tim Dalton
Minister for Congregational
Care and Older Adults



Rev. Dr. Leah Fowler
Minister for Intergenerational
Christian Education and Formation



Rev. Derrick T. Jordan
Ministerial Staff



Rev. Jim Keat
Minister of Digital Worship
and Education



Dr. Jillian Langford
Associate Director of Education
and Faith Formation
(Children and Families)



Rev. Mira Sawlani-Joyner
Minister of Justice, Advocacy,
and Change



Rev. Charlene A. Wingate
Ministerial Staff



Rev. Jabe Ziino
Associate Director of Education
and Faith Formation
(Youth and Young Adults)

If you or someone you know is experiencing a pastoral emergency,
please call 212.870.6710 and ask for the clergy on call.

PROGRAM AND SUPPORT STAFF

Paul Byssainthe, Jr.
Associate Organist

Natalie Fein
Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Nathaniel Gumbs
Director of Music

Talia Johnson
Manager of Member Services

Alexandra A. Pimentel
Director of Social Services & Outreach

Natalie Graves Tucker
Director of Communications and Development