

**THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**2019 Candidates**  
*for*  
**Lay Leadership**

*Visit [trcnyc.org/LayLeadership2019](http://trcnyc.org/LayLeadership2019) for more information on the 2019 Lay Leadership election.*



**Allen Kratz**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope that everyone who comes into contact with Riverside, through worship (in the nave, online or by radio) and through Riverside's many ministries and programs, is beloved and also feels beloved. I am committed to interacting with others in ways that provide support, understanding and love.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am part of Riverside because I value participating in the life of a faith community that includes persons of diverse characteristics, including race, economic class, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, family status, and physical and mental abilities. As an engaged member of this community, I seek opportunities to celebrate and increase this diversity.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge is listening to each other openly and with respect. Sensitive listening is important as Riverside addresses new opportunities. An important opportunity is determining how the purchase of McGiffert Hall can best advance the mission of Riverside. How do we communicate effectively? By seeking to understand before seeking to be understood.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

Serving on the Budget & Planning Committee, I've worked with clergy, staff and lay leaders on two projects designed to support the vitality of Riverside: (1) developing a Ministry Goals Worksheet to guide stewardship-based budgeting and (2) revising financial reports to maximize wider understanding of Riverside's month-by-month and year-to-year income and expenses. If I am elected to Church Council, I anticipate similar opportunities for service.



**Viril Andrick**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I want TRC to be a safe place to share opinions, grow spiritually, and fulfill the scriptures concerning social justice . For over 35 years I have worked on those goals through my volunteer work, leadership on committees and commissions, and as a supporter of the TRC's Social Services Committee,choirs, peace programs, concerts and forums. That is what community means to me.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I believe in the church community as a means to understand the world , fulfill Christ's mission, and to be in communion with other souls of like mind to make the world a better place . I have attended programs,services, concerts , Bible studies, annual meetings and events , as well as, volunteered tirelessly and fully. To me that is a fully engaged member- setting another place at the table.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge is to maintain our great spiritual journey while showing due diligence with our finances. We have to keep an inclusive , loving ministry based on Matthew 25 and still show financial responsibility . We must bring transparency, accountability and questioning, open minds to all our projects, programs, and meetings.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

For the last 35 years I have broadly supported the ministries of the church by being on the Church Council twice, a Maranatha Convener of the LGBTQ community here, the Secretary of the Budget and Planning Commission 2 years, Vice Chair of the Mission and Social Justice Commision, the Stewardship Committee, Coordinating 100 volunteers for the Food Drives, 35 years on the Social Services Com.,and the Co Chair of the Millennium Celebration 2000. I have a been a team player and have served 4 Senior Ministers. My role is to be as inclusive of the spiritual and social justice mission of this congregation as possible.



**Karen McVoy**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

God is love.. Love is love... The Holy Spirit is alive and well at The Riverside Church! That's what I want you to feel when you come into our building. One of the most important jobs I have had at Riverside, aside from being a member of the Chancel Choir and being able to sing to the glory of God, was being Chair of the Building Committee. I felt it was our job, in harmony with Dir. Of Operations and B&G, to make sure, once you hit the Nave door all you had to do was open your heart to the Holy Spirit.. the rest was up to us.. I want to continue to make sure that our Riverside

song is clear and pure.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I don't need a lot of words to answer this question. Rev. Jim Forbes guided me here. Through him, I knew I had found my spiritual home. I also knew that Riverside is where I wanted to raise my children. Where they always felt safe and loved.

Rev. Forbes always asked of us, "What's your mission?", to be present and decisive in ones prayer. I choose Jesus and the Riverside Church.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Right now I feel our greatest challenge is how to respect the positive,vibrant history of The Riverside Church while tackling the challenges of modern day Progressive Christianity. I want to be the voice of the past that has endeared Riverside to the world while enticing our mission to young people. Of course, we can't be all things to all people but our history is one of courage,music and sanctuary . I believe that is so very needed in these perilous times.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

All I can do is to continue to walk with God. I have been called by God for my voice to be His Light. Whether it is singing in the choir on Sunday morning or being a voice, dare I say a conduit,for the voiceless in the congregation. I want to continue to be a voice in the budget process so that it reflects the truth and consciousness of our congregation. I want to make sure the Organ and choirs are given the opportunity to sing praises to our Lord. I want Lay Leaders and Staff to have open and fruitful conversation that leads to promising compromise. We need to work together in respect and love. God is Love. Love is Love.



**Anna Meyer**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I recently read Reverend Fosdick's first sermon from the Riverside pulpit, and his words from 1930 ring true still today: "What if we could build here a church which would say...nothing matters in Christianity, however long the traditions or accumulated the sanctities...except those things that create abundant spiritual life." I hope that's what people experience: abundant life. Our community can be a place of renewal when we all work together in ways that acknowledge our individual gifts and roles. I commit to understanding the role I have to play as a lay leader in helping to create

that place, and to trust others to do the same. We can together live into God's dreams for abundant life for us.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

Riverside is a messy, complicated community of people all doing their best to live up to the teachings of Christ, to love God and love our neighbors. We are at our best when we remember that though we won't always succeed, we can start over together anyway. I believe everyone needs a community such as ours. It is important to me to be engaged – to show up as often as I can, to be fully present when I do, to respect my limitations, and to invite others to become part of our work – because our community only exists when we all participate.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge as a community is our own fear of living into a future that will look different than our past. We ought to stop behaving as though our church is dying. Riverside is alive and vibrant; our worship and our ministries are life-giving and life-changing. Change is difficult for all of us, however it shows up and takes root in our lives. Yet we are bound together by our investment in our church and our belief in what we can be together. God is at work here: let us remember that, ground ourselves in our love for each other and our common faith, honor the many things our church has been and continues to be, and commit to walk forward together in trust and mutual respect.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If elected to Council, I plan to continue to be an active participant in the life of our community, and to encourage others to be too. I will encourage all of us to bring our full selves to our community and take part in healthy ways that acknowledge each other's humanity as well as our boundaries. We can and should celebrate each other when we do this well and we can and should hold each other accountable when we miss the mark. The very essence of lay leadership is that it is servant leadership, and so I will continue to offer my service to clergy, staff, and fellow congregants whenever I can.



**Barbara Hampton**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope that all people experience acceptance, respect and grace here. In 2018, after visiting Corinth and the Athens agora where Paul spoke, I was reminded of his words (2 Corinthians: 5:16). Paul, once of elevated rank who estimated others by such factitious distinctions, changed. Discarding his *κατὰ σάρκα* viewpoint of Christ as a lowly Nazarene, he re-imagined Christ as the holy, benevolent Saviour and other Christians in terms of their moral character, while calling sin by its proper name. A Riverside greeter, I extend to all a welcome showing that virtue, personal character and moral worth are honored here.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

Because I am a baptized believer in Christ and fifth-generation Baptist, I sought a congregational church, and during the first years I lived nearby Riverside. Throughout the New Testament, followers of Jesus are admonished to leave sinful ways (protrepsis, --1 Thessalonians 2:12, 4: 1) or encouraged to continue in Christian practices (paraenesis --1 Timothy and Titus). Being engaged means practicing Christianity, working collaboratively with a diverse community to further the work of God on earth, while contributing constructively to the needs of the church and its community. In this way, being a disciple of Christ anchored in God's word becomes active.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Like Christians at Thessaloniki, we live in the wider, secularized world, albeit with different questions. Have social media become the standards arbiters of public discourse and ethical witness? Are people shaped by reality show imagery or by the daily rhythms of Christian piety? We face constant barrages of falsehoods from pillars of authority, while the symbolic traffic seems permeated with provocations of divisiveness. Will we normalize them, becoming helpless, or risk becoming unpopular in favor of our Biblical teachings? Let's face them with what Abraham Joshua Heschel called "moral grandeur and spiritual audacity," overriding them with critical thinking and discernment.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

It is love that is the measure of true spirituality, of true closeness in one's relationship with the Lord. I have consistently lived the lessons from Matthew 25, because what I do for "the least of these" to me is an expression of love. I have made 1 Corinthians 13 a lamp unto my feet, because I believe that God is love and if God lives within my soul, my plan to support the congregation, clergy and staff through service, stewardship, professional skills etc. should stem from God's greatest, most essential and eternal gift to all of us.





**Sonia Ingram**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I believe that The Riverside Church should continue to be a pillar of leadership on the issue of justice based investing and worship. I work and believe in working collaboratively with our neighbors at UTS, JTS, UCF, Columbia University and ICCR which can inspire systemic consideration of relevant and material ESG issues and has driven a higher standard for faith based investors. I have worked to leverage the talents and expertise of non profit local organizations dedicated to mobilizing capital to drive social, economic and environmental justice progress and programs.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am proud of the progress that I have made and my contributions to the Riverside Church Community over the past 6 years. For the past three years as a lay leader and at large member of the Budget and Planning Committee, I have contribute my knowledge of finance and budgeting to the improvement of communications. My enthusiasm and willingness to work collaboratively is a personal asset which has raised my consciousness and improved the value of my contributions to the church and to the larger NYC community. Being engaged member allows me to meet and speak with many about issues of concern such as environmental, social and economic justice and make the church and the world greater.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge is to reduce stress and contribute to community health, lifestyles and engagement in the world and within the church. I believe that we can do easy things such as survey the congregation and offer programs that inform, educate and improve lifestyles for everyone. This active focus on needs of families and individuals can inspire more engagement which can impact people positively and help everyone of all ages to meet personal dreams and goals. One belief I have always held is that our strength as a church is inextricably linked to strength of our faith in God and Jesus and our unique and comprehensive history in social justice.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I will support the life and vitality of the congregational members, clergy and staff by continuing to reach out to everyone with love and respect. I will talk, share and listen. NYC is a tourist mecca and tourism is at an all time high. It is a moral shortcoming if we cannot meet the needs of our community to thrive and survive with joy. I am committed to making a better world by uplifting people to make a better world. And an area of focus is the assets of the church and our real estate. In a perfect world it would be a clear reflection of God's love and Her interpretation of a just society. I will continue to grapple with aligning our values and belief systems with our portfolio.



### **Marilyn Mitchell**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I want people to experience God's love in action by the way they are treated in worship services and programs. Values of honesty and trust help people members and visitors feel at home. I am committed to being present in all my interactions at the church.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am at Riverside because it allows me to have close relationships and share my spiritual journey with people of like mind. It gives me a place to replenish spiritually. It allows me to volunteer and participate in the life of the community. Lastly, Riverside allows me to commit my gifts and time participating in lay leadership.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Riverside's greatest challenge is also its greatest appeal; it is its diversity. We are proud to be international, interracial and interdenominational. Add that we are affirming and diversity can either be a gateway to mistrust and mistreatment or a slice of heaven. Diversity is hard work. In Luke 6:32, we are reminded that there is no credit in loving someone who loves you. God provides a blueprint for making diversity work – love. It's the antidote to healing wounds and guiding Riverside to a path of healthy loving community. A small step towards a loving community is giving each other the benefit of the doubt.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If I am re-elected to the Church Council I will use the experience I've gained over the last 3 years to continue to serve and support the corporal and spiritual life of the church by communicating transparently, working effectively with other members of Council and guiding and supporting the staff.



**Geraldine Howard**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

Welcoming is the operative word...when guests interact with members of Riverside, I would prefer it if they would be given what the U.C.C. calls an “extravagant welcome”, much as you would to a relative that you’ve not met before. When I serve, I try to keep our guests in mind and ask myself what would it take to keep them coming back for more family reunions.

In my work as an ordained clergy, I am sometime asked where I worship -- somehow that bit of personal information wants out. I let them know that where I go is more than a place of worship for me, that it is where my servitude transitioned to transformation leading to ordination, that could not have been done without The Riverside Church.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

Riverside has been a place for me to grow in my religious experience and theological expression, and it is important to me that others are encouraged to forge ahead in their spiritual quest. I inherited my first faith community: church every Sunday, a homogeneous culture that was most of all safe, nurturing, and loving. It gave me a great start because of its joy in being a faith community. I made Riverside my community of choice, because of its love for scriptural penetration, and its support of social equality -- a biblical mandate (knowledge and compassion). The Riverside Church is where my gifts of service, spirit, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, stewardship are welcomed, and I am grateful.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Forgetting that we are “The Riverside Church”, humbly walk with God, and then perhaps never stop experiencing God’s hand in our transformation experience down by the riverside.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

Listen, pray, do...



**Ed Lowe**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I would hope they would experience a spiritually invigorating, intellectually challenging and socially engaging atmosphere of the church, in the finest tradition of The Riverside Church.

I have spent my life in service to this church, to give life to these aspirations through precept and example.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I have grown up in this church. I have been imbued with the culture and values of Riverside since early childhood. Interdenominational, International and Interracial has always been the way Riverside defined itself; though not always inter cultural, this church has struggled to improve and advance in that regard. I have been a part of that struggle through the years and intend to continue to be a lively and vibrant member of this congregation. We have but one church, one nation, one mother; we must love them and serve them, despite their flaws and clay feet. When we fall short of our highest aspirations, we must struggle to adapt, overcome and achieve.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Transparent, honest communication and reporting to the lay leaders of the congregation charged with the oversight of the Riverside Church, and the congregation at-large, of the financial and material state of affairs. There is a tendency to gloss embarrassing, unflattering news; "to put our best foot forward when the other foot needs attention", (Bill Coffin).

In the past 30 years we have struggled to keep programmatic spending within the limits of funding raised by congregational giving and to take no more than 5% of the earnings of our investment portfolio. In the past five years we have seen an explosion of paid staff, that has our personnel costs in excess of 40% of our budget.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

My role as a member of the Budget & Planning Committee is to monitor adherence to the budget passed by the congregation and report areas of departure from it, recommend modifications that reflect real-time spending demands, and suggest areas of economy in programming that won't degrade performance; to evaluate the budgeted programs of the church. Article VIII.1.d

I will gladly and cheerfully encourage my fellow congregants to become informed, engaged, and active in the life of this church. I will commit to helping the staff to serve and support the congregation whom they here to serve, to develop and execute the initiatives of this congregation.



**Jennifer James Soto**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

Qualities and values that I hope people encounter at Riverside include a non-judgmental, God-centered, faith-filled congregation of all walks of life. We are fearless in our pursuit of justice and unwavering in unconditional love. I am committed to creating that experience by (i) recognizing and addressing my own biases and prejudices; (ii) walking in faith and abandoning fear; (iii) embracing and valuing all images of God; and (iv) teaching and empowering those whose voices have been temporarily silenced.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

We initially came to Riverside because of the Children, Youth and Families program. We have two children, currently, ages 14 and 12. While my husband and I were spiritually fed at our former church, our kids weren't.

Riverside fits me. I am committed to social justice: from registering people to vote in South Africa's first democratic election to designing African/African American centered curricula for home-schooled children.

Being an engaged member means being active, more than a static recipient of amazing sermons. I have a responsibility to connect with others, spread the word and push for social change.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

One of our greatest challenges is engaging teens. It appears that child/youth church involvement begins to decline around the 6th grade.

We often refer to teens as the future. Teens are, also, the present. They are the pulse of society. Teens need a platform within the church to share their voices, opinions and ideas. That being said, they're still young and need mentors, guidance and opportunities to exercise leadership.

Proposals: (i) Teen Sunday- teens work with pastors to lead the church service; (ii) Intergenerational Buddies: programs for teens and older adults where they can share ideas, experiences and cultivate relationships; (iii) Bring a friend to teen church events.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I've been a member of Riverside for a year (in June) and attended for a year prior to joining. In that time I've served in multiple ways and plan to continue. I regularly attend monthly Education Commission meetings and many Adult Bible Study meetings, served on the interview and selection committee for the Youth/Young Adult pastor, volunteered at the Grateful Gift Market, Freedom School and Career Day. As a member of the commission, I welcome the opportunity to help lead the congregation in Christian education and spiritual formation.



**Bryant Harris**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I would want people to experience a caring community of warmth and respect. I commit to these ideas by speaking and acknowledging my fellow members during service with passing the peace as well as outside service. I believe in practicing what I preach and try to live up to the idea of treating people the way I want to be treated.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am part of Riverside Church because of its diverse congregation and progressive ideas that support my social philosophy. I believe that Riverside supports its members through various ways including listening to all concerns including those of opposing viewpoints. Furthermore, it is important to me that I am a member of a church where scripture from the Old Testament and New Testament are read during worship. Being an engaged member means supporting the mission of the church and taking a role in implementing those ideas. It also means being aware of current government policy and its effects on the nation and the world.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge is to take a stand against those conservative forces that suppress our values and principles. Using our resources we should unite with similar church communities and organizations to develop strategies that results in social change.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I am currently on the Education Commission and Buildings Committee, if elected I plan to continue to work with the Education Commission assisting members, clergy and staff. Also, I would continue to support ideas from the commission and helping it grow. In the past I supported Career Day with my connections with the Department of Education. I also helped Freedom School by donating books and reading aloud to students. In 2015 I retired from the NYC Department of Education after 34 years. I believe that my experience as a teacher and administrator helps strengthens programs in the Education Commission.

**Raydale Blaylock-Shand**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

A place where all feel welcome, supported without judgement and bias. A community of inclusiveness and acceptance of all individuals and families. I will continue to reinforce empathy, and love and be willing to support those that are new to the community by answering questions, and being helpful in any way possible.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am apart of Riverside because of God. I have never been to a church where I have felt the presence of the lord, and felt comfortable to worship in my personal way. I enjoy sharing my experience with others while having time to sit within myself and have a moment with the lord. Being apart of this community means having a safe place to worship, a friendly and supportive environment for my children to grow spiritually and develop personal relationships with god. Riverside serves as a special place which we respect and hold dear to us. It's wonderful to look forward to seeing other members not knowing all their names but remembering them by face.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

There have been ups and downs, many changes but with the grace of god we have been able to stick together and try and meet challenges head on.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I plan to be an active member of the church willing to do what I can to the best of my ability with the grace of God.



**Courtney Klamar**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope people feel safe and are able to connect with the love of the community and the love of God. I am committed to supporting that experience for all Riversiders, especially our youngest. I believe if children are able to know and understand God's love, connect with new friends and have fun it sets an important foundation for their lifelong spiritual journey. I hope I can play a small part in making that happen as a Sunday School teacher and as a member of the Education Commission.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I love that Riverside is a place that not only speaks about faith but also acts on it. I have met some wonderful friends and inspiring humans at Riverside and there are still so many more I have yet to meet. Being part of this community gives me hope in the darkest days and provides an opportunity to connect with others on their faith journey.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

I think the fact that we are a big church in a big city is one of our biggest strengths and our biggest challenges.

I hope through programming we can continue to provide opportunities for people to connect in smaller groups and form communities within our larger community. It is so easy to get lost in this city, in this church- I hope each person who comes to Riverside is able to make connections that allow them to experience radical hospitality and God's love through this community of people.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I'm hopeful that I can continue to provide ideas, enthusiasm, leadership, resources and hard work to enhance and support the education ministries at Riverside.



**Kate Sullivan**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope that people feel at home at Riverside. I want people to come to Riverside and realize that we are different, that we work hard to truly care for the least of these and to fight injustice in both our community and society at large. I want it to be clear that the radical, accepting love of God drives our work and ministries.

I am committed to creating this experience through working with our young people at Riverside Kid's Worship and being an active member of

Riverside's Young Adult Ministry. Through these ministries I am able to both teach and learn what radical love looks like and how it exists in community.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am a part of Riverside because from the first day I walked into the sanctuary and saw a woman preaching about how imperative it is to have social justice in our faith, I knew I belonged. Since that first day, I have stayed because of the authentic and kind relationships I have formed through the Young Adult Ministry, church events, and coffee hour, that both challenge me to continue to live my faith in the world and comfort and support me. To me being an engaged member of the church is finding ways to use my gifts and talents. For me that has been through teaching with Riverside Kid's Worship, serving on the Nominating Committee, and participating in the Young Adult Ministry.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

I believe our greatest challenge as a community is change. As with any established community, there is always a tension between change and tradition, and I believe Riverside is wrestling with what the church should look like in 2019.

I am not sure I have all the answers on how to respond to it. I am sure that it requires us as a community to humbly examine ourselves and critically look at the areas that need change. As a younger person my tendency can be to run towards change, but I also need to reflect on the power of the tradition that came before me. I also believe as a church we have to look at our traditions and decide if they are there due to habit or pride, or if they are integral.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If elected, I plan to support the life and vitality of the congregational members, clergy, and staff through fulfilling my role on the commission. That can take many forms, be it providing ideas and feedback, performing administrative tasks, attending meetings and seminars, or teaching others about Riverside and the commission. It is important to me that if elected I provide the service I was elected for, and use both my passion and my experience to do a good job.



**Annie Meredith**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I want everyone to feel welcomed, loved, challenged, and supported at Riverside. I want them to believe that they can be a part of realizing God's love and justice because they see it reflected here in this community. I'm a mom of a kindergartener who loves coming to Sunday School and a volunteer with the youth group. I will work to support the development of the faith and spiritual life of everyone, but especially the young people of this community. I want them to know that this is a safe place for them to be in and to grow up - a place that is full of people who love them just as they are and who are committed to going on this journey together with them to be God's love in the world.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

Being a member of a church community is part of the fabric of who I am and I am so proud to be a member of a church with such a long tradition of advocacy for justice and a church that is in a position to bring Jesus' important message of radical love to the world. I believe that being in community together means service to others and the community itself; it means giving of our time, talents, and energy. We all have a responsibility to make this community stronger.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

I believe that Riverside faces the challenge that all churches are facing during these changing times for what it means to be "church". It's a struggle to hang together and grow as a community when everyone is pulled in so many different directions and with many other options for how to spend their time. Churches can no longer expect people to just come to them - they must go out and be in the world. And while that means being engaged in service to the community and inviting everyone in and making them feel welcome, our call is greater than that. We must support the needs of the world by being a part of transforming it to bring it closer to the community that God calls us to be.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I will continue to support Riverside through my time and volunteer energy. I have a strong desire to deepen my engagement at Riverside and a love for this community. If elected, I would support the work of the Education Commission by sharing my ideas to support existing ministries and identifying areas for growth. Education is such an important component of supporting Riverside's growth as a community. We need a strong foundation upon which to build our faith, to help us carry Jesus' message to the world. I want to support Riverside in its ongoing journey of faith.



**Chiara Fuller**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

Love, dignity, joy, acceptance and family are the values and qualities that I hope people experience when they interact with Riverside Church. I am committed to helping create invaluable experiences by practicing these key qualities and values through the long-lasting friendships and interactions that I foster within the community. Also, I will diligently work with the Education Commission to incorporate these very values into the foundation of all the justice oriented programs that we organize for people within the Riverside community and beyond.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

Riverside has become my home away from home, while I work and pursue my graduate studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. Riverside Church is a safe space with an extended family that has taught and shown me the true meaning of God's love, grace and mercy through a community of care and its invaluable programs. The role as an engaged community member means boldly and selflessly committing to learning, growing and collaborating in God's love and grace while continuously practicing dignity, justice and service for others within the church and in the world.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Unjust and immoral worldly issues and attitudes seem to be working overtime to test and control our individual and collective spirituality and relationship with God. Our greatest challenge as a community is to have the fortitude to move beyond worldly challenges by protecting, embracing and practicing our faith as we grow in God's promise for our lives. We should respond to this great challenge by actively working together to build our faith and endurance for these battles through daily acts of kindness, gratitude and dedication to promoting justice and God's love above all.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If I am elected as a member of the Education Commission, first, I plan on thoughtfully listening to the needs, concerns and goals of the congregational members, clergy, and staff. Secondly, I will collaborate with my committee members and the church community to gain an authentic understanding of how my knowledge, skills and life experiences can best be utilized to support and lead the missions and visions for life and vitality at Riverside. Finally, I will dedicate myself to practicing reflexivity as I adapt and commit to effectively fulfilling the duties for our various educational projects.



**Charlene Wingate**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

It is my hope that people experience a safe environment in which they can explore their understanding of what it means to be a Christian. As education is key to understanding most things, I am committed to providing an array of Christian Education opportunities and entry points for the full gambit of various learning styles represented in the world and therefore here at Riverside. Educating from a place of inclusivity is crucial to our success. Becoming a beloved community requires time, patience and intentional Christian education which embraces the example of God's love the Bible provides for us.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

Riverside, from inception, was created to build bridges between vastly different communities in divided times. Unfortunately, while time has passed, some things are still the same. I am called to building bridges between communities of different perspectives. Riverside's diversity is a small sampling of our larger world hence, it provides the perfect environment to engage in this work. Being an engaged member of this community means that I am in a community of people who value inclusivity and through a Christian lens are committed to connecting to all of the people of the world to help improve our world, despite our differences.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

I believe that our greatest challenge as a community is one of deeper understanding of the various perspectives we embody. Perhaps this could be resolved through a greater level of honest communication and education of the varying perspectives so that all sides may learn about the "why" behind each perspective. Building and maintaining relationships are necessary but, not easy. Through increased patience, communication, engagement and prayer we can learn to listen to each other, hopefully learn from each other and with God, love each other in our differences finding commonality in our hopes of a better, stronger, and loving community.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

Through my role on the Education Commission, I plan to create and support programming which will further our church mission of creating a safe place where all are welcome. This will be evident by the wide array of Christian Education programs offered for all ages, various academic levels and social locations. All of my experience and expertise in education will be accessible to anyone in need. Every stakeholder in our community needs an educational outlet to explore their understanding of the Christian faith and it is my objective to be a part of the team that provides it.





**Danielle Hartley**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

When people walk in Riverside's doors, my hope is that they experience the loving embrace of being welcomed home. My family has received such love from members here who have become family to us, and I want to extend this Christ-like practice of radical hospitality to others. For me, the quote attributed to Teresa of Avila, "Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours..." is powerful imagery. It compels my introvert nature to meet new people, check in on friends, learn names around the lunch table, and invite people over.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I'm part of the Riverside Church because I wanted to attend a church that welcomed my family, was engaged in good work, and reflected my city. Many churches are welcoming and have thriving mission work, but Riverside is special in its reflection of the city in which it resides. Being an engaged member of this community means fully taking in the opportunity to develop relationships with such a life full, energetic, diverse representation of the city. It's freeing to belong to a church who will welcome anyone I invite.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge as a community is listening. Listening to God's voice in a frantic, fast-paced world. Listening to who God calls the church to be in the world and not letting the world tell us. Listening to each other when our varied life experiences leave us in a place of not understanding one another. And really listening to the needs of those whom we are called to serve. Listening often feels boring, like a space holder, and wasteful of our precious resource of time. But, actively listening will lead to a deepened awareness of where God is working.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I enjoy building intentional community and I have been trained as a Stephen Minister (lay leadership for Christ-centered care). I hope to use my experience to support the deepening of the spiritual life of our community with the understanding that parish care is vital to the health and mission of the church. For example, I love that Membership Care & Parish Life includes both Food Pantry and Faith Development, and I would like to be part of strengthening connections between how we practice spiritual growth and compassion.



**Carol Fouke-Mpoyo**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope people experience Riverside as home - where all are welcome, included and safe, fully part of a community with a mature faith in a liberating Christ. A justice- and service-oriented community, where we are equipped to be good allies with people directly impacted by systems of injustice. I am committed to continue supporting the kind of work in which the MSJ Commission, ministries and staff have been actively engaged these past three years, especially identifying opportunities for actions that make a positive difference in people's lives, undergirded by anti-racism

work and training in community organizing and in the biblical foundations for social justice action.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I was attracted to Riverside (in 1978!) by its social justice action and witness, which I consider an integral part of "church." I am cemented into this wonderful community by a network of relationships built over time as we've joined in action together. To be engaged means, do something! There are many options at Riverside. Don't be intimidated by the large size of our church. To find where you best fit, read the monthly "Life of Our Community" bulletin. Peruse [www.trcnyc.org](http://www.trcnyc.org). Subscribe to the e-news. Share your interests with any minister or lay leader and ask them to help you get involved (whether in a ministry or church wide event). Don't give up; persist until you find your place!

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Here are two! First, the world's people need Riverside's bold witness and effective action for racial, economic, social and environmental justice. We do a lot - but are we being as bold as we can be? Especially on ending the shame of poverty in a world where there's enough for all, on interrupting the persistence of systemic racism in our nation for 400+ years, and on stemming climate change, which is already killing people and could soon render unrecognizable our world as we know it. Second, how can we "do the right thing" regarding McGiffert Hall (indeed, our entire block), e.g. using it not just to generate needed cash but as a center of increased, visible delivery of justice and service?

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I'd hope to build on the MSJ Commission's good work these past 3 years (I've been chair for 2). We drove Riverside's participation in the Poor People's Campaign and Wendy's Boycott, and will continue to offer Riversiders opportunities for impactful action, undergirded by learning (see above). We seek to model collaboration, communication and respect - and at times respectful persistence! - in our work with staff, MSJ's 17 ministries, Church Council and the other commissions, always seeking to foster unity and build strength and competence. One outcome: a "How-to Handbook" for ALL Riverside's ministries (not just MSJ's). I'm excited about our growing collaboration with Youth & Young Adults!

**Susan Wersan**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope that people experience a diverse and energetic congregation where we appreciate and love each other--or are aspiring to do so.--across differences in race, age, class and gender and sexual orientation. I hope people experience a warm welcome when they come to the church. I am committed to help create that experience by running for MSJ and if elected will help provide support and encouragement for its extraordinary range of ministries as well as try to further inter-commissional cooperation. I also aim to be more intentional in engaging with newcomers or people I don't know in the coffee hour and inviting people to become more deeply involved in the church.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I was drawn to Riverside more than thirty years ago by the church's commitment to social justice and to the strong stand it took on some of the pressing issues of the day. Working for social justice is fundamental to my faith. It has strengthened my spirit to work with like-minded people (who will still disagree at times) towards a common goal. We are here to work for the kingdom of God on earth and I feel we are blessed at Riverside to have to have so many and various opportunities to do this in whatever commission area we are drawn to.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

The greatest challenge facing the Riverside Church Community today--along with the entire global community of which we are members is the mayhem the human race has inflicted on the planet in the form of climate change through the heedless combustion of fossil fuel to sustain our current lifestyle of comfort and endless acquisition. We have seen have seen catastrophic rise in sea levels, floods, fires and famines, climate refugees, species loss and we stand on the verge of the greatest threat ever to the human race. Our first challenge today is to recognize our culpability, repent of our failure to care for our one earth and do the spiritual work to help us change our values --all ASAP

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

By as much participation in as many church events as possible. In promoting program and answers to problems across commissions, It would be helpful I think to explore how we can have healthy dialogue in diverse groups across the congregation possibly to include staff, clergy and congregational member, guided by clergy and/or outside professionals in cultivating listening skills and how we can deal effectively with difference. We need to get to know each other better especially those outside our usual groups.

**Imelda Isles**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

When a person worships at Riverside I hope they feel the presence of God and experience the love, warmth and inclusion that we offer. . I commit to be “welcoming” to others which include not only members of the congregation but visitors as well.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am a part of the Riverside because of the spirituality and sense of community I feel when I walk through the doors Being an engaged member means that I contribute to the vitality and growth of a church that I am proud to be a part of. Serving as an usher allows me to interact with many of the congregants as well as visitors which mean that I can spread my experience to others.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our community should endeavor to have honest and open discussions as well as trust. We should all offer it and with God’s Grace, hope that it is reciprocated.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If elected on the Nominating Committee. I would support the life and vitality of The Riverside Church by using my time and talents in serving as a lay leader and encourage others to do the same.

**Abosedo George**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope people experience radical welcome and encouragement to be God's hands in the world. I try to be welcoming towards Riversiders and new people.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am a part of Riverside because I wanted to be in a church that follows Jesus and his radical social justice mission on Earth . Being an engaged member of this community means trying to follow Jesus myself.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Our greatest challenge is to build community among ourselves so that we can be in alignment as we work with others in the world.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

Absolutely!





**Mari Satterlee**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope people interacting with Riverside will find a welcoming community that is committed to spiritual growth and to social justice. I would also hope that people would experience these qualities during the worship service from the time they walk through the church's door until the time they leave. As part of the Worship Commission, I would commit to finding ways to support the clergy in creating this experience of welcome and spiritual growth.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

When I moved to New York City eight years ago, I left a diverse church in Baltimore that welcomed all people, and was committed to spiritual growth and social justice. I knew I could not recreate the exact experience at a new church, but I found these core values at Riverside. I am seeking to be a more engaged member of the community, and I believe this means that members of the community should examine their beliefs, gifts and talents and find an area where they can find, to paraphrase Buechner, their greatest joy meets the church's greatest need.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

Like any community I know that The Riverside Church experiences many challenges. One major challenge is bringing together a congregation with members and visitors from a wide variety of backgrounds, traditions and beliefs. Since I have been a member, I have experienced efforts to bring the community together such as a revitalized coffee hour and recently the addition of the Sunday Suppers. I would promote continued efforts to provide opportunities for people of diverse background, experiences and opinions to interact with and learn to appreciate each other.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If I am elected to the Worship Commission, I would be an active listener to the constituents of the church in order to discern how to improve the various aspect of worship. I would be willing to help with the everyday details such as communion preparation, help with greeting or participating in the liturgy, as well as being committed to envisioning ways to create current and meaningful worship experiences.



**Patricia Ali**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

For me Riverside is all about serving, thinking about ways to help others. My commitment is to the Church School where I have taught for 32 years. We bring out children to Jesus, opening up their faith in God, the 3 in 1. We let the children know that Riverside is a place where they are unconditionally loved. I am committed to radically welcoming people to Riverside, especially families, greeting people as they come into the Nave or Church School. I want people to experience Riverside as a diverse, inclusive, standing up for justice and peace, a place where each person is

valued, listened to, cared for be it through the food pantry, help for the homeless, prison ministry.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I came to Riverside because it was a multiracial church – as is my family. I became more and more engaged because of the warm welcome my children and I received, wanting to give back to the Church as we had been given. Being engaged means working to make this a better world, as Jesus taught us. Riverside is the perfect place to accomplish this. Witnessing the joy filled, loving Church School education my children received made me want to be a Church School teacher. Serving on the Worship Commission has expanded my engagement – serving communion, helping prepare the communion table, reaching out to visitors to welcome them to Riverside, being an active listener on concerns in the Church.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

The greatest challenge our community has is to make Riverside essential to people's lives – the place to go to hear inspiring sermons, the place to go to serve others, e.g., by contributing food and grocery bags to the Food Pantry, learning about and taking action to protect the earth, fighting for racial, gender justice, the place to worship through music. We accomplish this by spreading the word that Riverside is the place to be to create a loving, just world, as the Sermon on the Mount teaches us.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

I can most support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy and staff by giving my time, talents, resources and love for Jesus to the Riverside Church. I will be an active listener to the inspiring sermons, to other parishioners, to staff and clergy. I will continue my Church School ministry. I will encourage people to attend Riverside, make visitors and church members feel welcome and valued.



**Derrick Jordan**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

My hope is that people experience a welcoming, inspiring and loving community that embraces diversity and the inclusivity of everyone. My commitment to creating this experience is evidenced by my work over the last year as a member of the Worship Commission, and my dedicated support, service, and commitment to the Riverside community over the years. My hope is to continue the progressive, inclusive and healing work of the church.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am a part of Riverside because of the many ways in which the church is able to care for and meet the needs of the congregation/community; whether it be through various social service programs or the variety of worship opportunities.

An engaged member of this community is one who participates in not only the main worship service on Sunday, but one who supports and actively participates in areas of need throughout the church (volunteering with any of the ministry areas, commissions, committees, etc.)

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

A significant challenge as a community is the lack of involvement in activities/programming/services (worship and other). Hiring a consultant to address this area may be an appropriate response.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

If elected, I plan to support by continuing to actively participate in the life of the church and by bringing my own personal/professional/ministry experiences into spaces where they can be useful.



**Jesse Wilkins**

*What values or qualities do you hope people experience when they interact with The Riverside Church?*

I hope that people find Riverside to be a place that is spiritually uplifting and a place that allows them to re-center their personal lives as they move forward on their Christian journey. I hope that Riverside gives a sense that we are a community of faith that is inclusive of all individuals and particularly for those who often feel lonely and alone. I hope Riverside gives a strong sense of belonging and support for all individuals longing for inclusion in a Christian community. I am committed to continued participation in various areas of the church and in welcoming others that I do not personally know in the Sunday service and elsewhere in Riverside.

*Why are you a part of Riverside and what does it mean to be an engaged member of this community?*

I am a part of Riverside because my fellow congregants, the clergy, and numerous staff members make my faith journey richly rewarding. Being engaged with this community allows me to personally recenter my life, and constantly reinforces my beliefs and my faith. Being engaged allows me to thank God and give back, directly to God, it seems often, for all the blessings he has given me. Riverside is one of the greatest blessings for me.

*What is our greatest challenge as a community and how should we respond to it?*

I think the greatest challenge is using our financial resources wisely in continuing the many programs here at Riverside, not only in our lifetimes but far beyond them into a future that will be unknown to us. I think perhaps sometimes we should look back and remember why Riverside was established in the first place. I think we should each challenge ourselves individually to support Riverside as best we can, and together work to ensure that the endowment is not only maintained but that it is able to grow in value so that Riverside's prosperous existence is assured for many years to come.

*If you are elected, how do you plan to support the life and vitality of congregational members, clergy, and staff through your role?*

In my role as a lay leader, if elected, I will work constantly to engage with clergy and staff, and particularly engage in meaningful dialogue with other members of the congregation. There is no lack of differing opinions on any number of concerns that affect all of us. I would take the time to listen to as many members as I can. There are times for leading, but there are also times for listening, and really hearing what someone has to say. I will strive for effective communications regularly among clergy, staff, other lay leaders and members of the congregation.

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## **CHURCH COUNCIL (pages 1-8)**

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Allen Kratz  
Virl Andrick  
Karen McVoy  
Anna Meyer

Barbara Hampton  
Sonia Ingram  
Marilyn Mitchell  
Geraldine Howard

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## **BUDGET & PLANNING (page 9)**

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Ed Lowe

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## **EDUCATION COMMISSION (pages 10-17)**

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Jennifer James Soto  
Bryant Harris  
Raydale Blaylock-Shand  
Courtney Klamar

Kate Sullivan  
Annie Meredith  
Chiara Fuller  
Charlene Wingate

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## **MEMBERSHIP CARE & PARISH LIFE COMMISSION (page 18)**

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Danielle Hartley

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## **MISSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION (pages 19-20)**

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Carol Fouke-Mpoyo

Susan Wersan

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## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE (pages 21-22)**

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Imelda Isles

Abosedo George

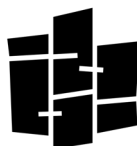
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## **WORSHIP COMMISSION (pages 23-26)**

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Mari Satterlee  
Patricia Ali

Derrick Jordan  
Jesse Wilkins



THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK