



The Installation of

REVEREND MIA MICHELLE MCCLAIN

JANUARY 7, 2023



RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

699 MAINE AVE SW

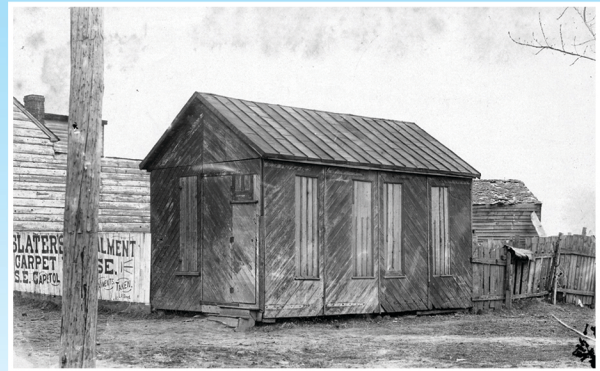
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024

A BRIEF HISTORY OF

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

From 1857 - 1900

Riverside Baptist Church began as a Sunday school led by a young Virginian, Chastain Clarke Meador, who on July 26, 1857, became the first pastor of 24 charter members of the Island Baptist Church. Located on D Street, between 4 1/2 and 6th Streets S.W., its first home was in a wooden structure moved from another church site. Rev. Meador's confederate sympathies caused a faction of the people to ask for his resignation, which the majority refused. The church and the Union survived, and in October 1866, it is recorded that a revival of religion commenced in the church which led to a long-continuing series of daily meetings, during which over 150 persons professed conversion, 124 of whom united with the church by baptism. The membership could no longer be accommodated, so a new brick structure was built in 1869, and the church was renamed Fifth Baptist. A period of growth through evangelism, visitation, teaching and training of leaders, and a ministry of social concerns marked the last third of the century. The church began a city mission and undertook the support of a foreign missionary.



From 1902 - 1960

A young South Carolina lawyer and member of the church, Joseph James Darlington, brought a suit against the railroad that was disrupting the community of the church, and took the case to three District of Columbia courts and the U.S. Supreme Court, where he won his case. The judgments against the railroad provided the money for relocation to 6 1/2 and E Streets where a new church was dedicated in 1902. The growth of the church during Dr. Meador's 47-year ministry was continued by pastors Bruner, Briggs, Hall and Coburn. Rev. Porter Harrison led the church from 1953 to 1965. On the 100th anniversary of its founding, Fifth Baptist was forced to move again. The Redevelopment Land Agency bought the old site, and a new building was built at 7th Street and Maine Avenue. While the church was being built, the congregation worshipped in Hogate's Restaurant. Because of the location, the name was changed to Riverside Baptist. Only a handful of members survived the urban redevelopment of the early 1960s and made the transition to Riverside.

From 1960s - 1980s

Rev. Frank Foster was called as the new minister in 1971. He called the members to open wide the doors to all who might come. And many came to be new members, creating a truly bi-racial congregation worshipping God together. Frank and Sara Foster's untimely death in a plane crash in May 1972 was a traumatic experience for the church. In the midst of this tragedy, the members determined to continue the ministry Frank had begun.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

The deacons divided the responsibilities of the church among their number, and the Honorable John H. Buchanan, Congressman from Alabama and a deacon in the church, served as interim minister until the coming of Rev. Robert Troutman in 1973. New directions and response to the changing needs of our city marked Rev. Troutman's fourteen year ministry. He led the congregation to become a member of the Progressive Baptist Convention in recognition of an integrated membership. Youth ministry was stressed through programs such as "Our Place," a weekly program of drama, recreation, and study, and the formation of two children's choirs which met weekly. Members participated in a variety of adult Sunday school classes and evening forums on contemporary issues. Rev. Troutman encouraged participation in events such as "Invitation to Life," which featured such speakers as Coretta Scott King and Max Cleland.

From late 1980s – 2022

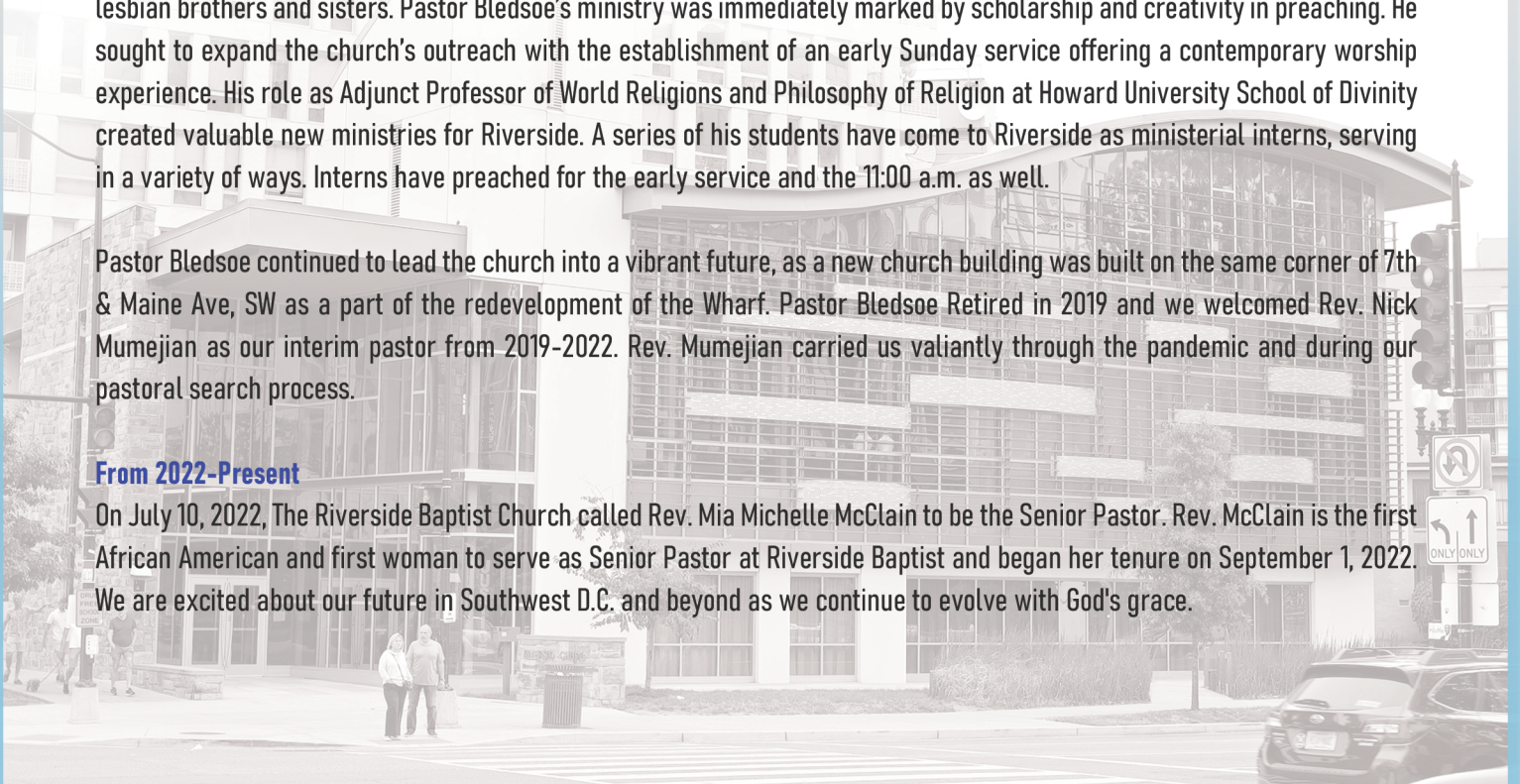
John Buchanan, as Interim Minister, and Rev. David Jordan provided leadership in the period before Rev. William Smith became pastor in 1988. Dr. Smith's optimistic outlook toward our inner city service and ministry encourage an expanding tutoring program and ministry to the families involved. Dr. Smith also began a mid-week Bible Study, reaching out to bring in new members from the community.

After three years, Riverside found itself in transition once again. It faced a new social issue, that of inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community. Dr. Michael Bledsoe answered Riverside's call in February 1992. In that same year, Riverside voted to disassociate itself from the Southern Baptist Convention and to reaffirm its relationship to the D. C. Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, USA and as it did this, it made a declaration that it would be welcoming of all people, including gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Pastor Bledsoe's ministry was immediately marked by scholarship and creativity in preaching. He sought to expand the church's outreach with the establishment of an early Sunday service offering a contemporary worship experience. His role as Adjunct Professor of World Religions and Philosophy of Religion at Howard University School of Divinity created valuable new ministries for Riverside. A series of his students have come to Riverside as ministerial interns, serving in a variety of ways. Interns have preached for the early service and the 11:00 a.m. as well.

Pastor Bledsoe continued to lead the church into a vibrant future, as a new church building was built on the same corner of 7th & Maine Ave, SW as a part of the redevelopment of the Wharf. Pastor Bledsoe Retired in 2019 and we welcomed Rev. Nick Mumejian as our interim pastor from 2019-2022. Rev. Mumejian carried us valiantly through the pandemic and during our pastoral search process.

From 2022-Present

On July 10, 2022, The Riverside Baptist Church called Rev. Mia Michelle McClain to be the Senior Pastor. Rev. McClain is the first African American and first woman to serve as Senior Pastor at Riverside Baptist and began her tenure on September 1, 2022. We are excited about our future in Southwest D.C. and beyond as we continue to evolve with God's grace.



REVEREND

MIA MICHELLE MCCLAIN

An actor, a songwriter, a pastor, a producer—The Reverend Mia Michelle McClain has always looked for ways to integrate the diversity of her interests, passions and callings for the sake of life and liberation.

A native of New Orleans, Rev. Mia danced her way onto the stage at two years old and began her love affair with music shortly after, studying classical piano, voice, and violin. Following the completion of her conservatory training at Syracuse University's Department of Drama (Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre), Rev. Mia moved to New York City to pursue a career in the performing arts that took her to many stages around the world. While living her dream, she gained a Master of Arts degree in Arts and Public Policy from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where she explored the intersection of performance arts and black identity politics. Her 2014 thesis presentation was an original one-woman interactive performance piece entitled *Color Me*. She is a proud member of the Actor's Equity Association, and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

In the midst of working in the entertainment industry, Rev. Mia felt a call to explore her spiritual curiosities and was led to seminary. She earned her Master of Divinity Degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York, NY, where she concentrated on homiletics and psychology. While at Union, she was active in the Black Women's Caucus, led several chapel services, and was the recipient of the Jonathan Kneeland Preaching Fellowship and the Karen Ziegler Feminist Preaching Prize.

Prior to her call to Riverside, Rev. Mia served as the Associate Minister of Faith Formation and Outreach at the Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she was the first African American in the history of Myers Park to be called to serve on its senior staff. Before that call, she served as Interim Director of Children's Ministries and Social Justice Minister at the Fort Washington Collegiate Church in Washington Heights, New York City. Rev. Mia was licensed to preach the Gospel at the First Corinthian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York, and was ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament in the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ at Fort Washington Collegiate Church. Rev. Mia is the first African American and first woman to serve in the role of Senior Pastor in Riverside DC's 165-year history.

Rev. Mia's ministry extends beyond the walls of any edifice. She is the recipient of the Innovation Grant (2021), awarded by the Foundations of Christian Leadership program at Duke Divinity, which enabled research and production around decolonizing liturgical practice and space, and she launched a 4-week course entitled *Decolonizing Liturgy*. Her liturgical, musical, and literary works have been commissioned and featured by the United Church of Christ, the United Church of Canada, The Alliance of Baptists, the Unitarian Universalists Association, the Feminist Studies in Religion Summer Book Club, and a few books including, *For the Facing of this Hour: Preaching that Resists White Christian Nationalism* (Benjamin Boswell), for which she wrote the Afterword, and *Pub Theology and Beyond: New Options for Religious Discourse*, with her chapter entitled, "Stolen Cookies: A Take on Black Lives Mattering."

In July 2021, she served as featured liturgist and songwriter for the 33rd General Synod of the United Church of Christ. This July, she will be one of 3 worship directors for the 34th General Synod of the United Church of Christ held in Indianapolis, Indiana. In addition to her formal ministry, she continues to write and produce music and is currently recording her 2nd EP to be released in 2024. Though the surprises of this life and faith journey have often left her confused, dumbfounded, riddled with grief over the things and people that were seemingly lost in the transition from artist to pastor, she knows now—without a shadow of a doubt—that nothing is wasted.



REVEREND

LISA L. THOMPSON, PHD

Dr. Lisa L. Thompson, a native of Cedar Grove, NC, is Associate Professor and the Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair of Black Homiletics and Liturgics at the Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion.

As a leader in scholarship that values intellectual rigor and concerns of faith, she holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master of Arts in Religion from Vanderbilt University. She prioritizes discussing the ways religion can be used for the destruction or uplift of our life together. Her current book projects are entitled *Ingenuity: Preaching as the Outsider* (Fall 2018) and *Preaching the Headlines* (Fall 2022). *Ingenuity* mines the preaching practices of black women for the sake of re-thinking theologies and methods of preaching as a whole. The book is a hallmark of the Black Womanist Homiletic that spans her work. *Preaching the Headlines* is based on a course she created and has taught since 2012 across multiple academic and non-academic contexts. The project engages the intersection of social and religious discourses for the purpose of helping communities address everyday life issues as matters of faith, while oriented towards a just earth. The Louisville Institute awarded her a First Book Grant for Minority Scholars for the project.



As an extension of her commitment to some of the most underrepresented and vulnerable populations in our world, she worked in case management for programs affiliated with the Department of Juvenile Justice and Alternative to Corrections for Women in North Carolina before pursuing the study of theology and religion full time. She majored in both Psychology and Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She continues to consult, speak, and lead workshops on self-leadership and cultural change in the public and private sectors. As an ordained Baptist minister, she holds a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary, and has served in university and parish settings.

Prior to joining VDS she held posts as Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, Assistant Professor of Homiletics at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Lilly Faculty Fellow at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. Thompson has served as the president of the Black Caucus of the Academy of Homiletics, serves on the Advisory Board of Wabash Center for Teaching Religion and Theology, and is a nominating member of the Association of Practical Theology. Through her teaching, service, and scholarship, Lisa L. Thompson prioritizes concrete outcomes as a reflection of the traditions and values we claim to believe.



MINISTER

JOSHUA BRIAN CAMPBELL, MDIV

Joshua Brian Campbell has an impressive resume for their extraordinary contributions to music, film, and social justice. Currently, Campbell serves as the Director of Music and Arts at the Wake Forest School of Divinity and Director of the University Gospel Choir. Campbell captured the world's attention in 2018 with Campbell's original song *Sing Out/March On*, written and performed for the late Congressman John Lewis. The viral success caught the attention of Hollywood. Campbell's original composition "Stand Up" for the film *Harriet*, co-written with the film's lead Cynthia Erivo, earned Campbell Critics Choice, Golden Globe, and Oscar nominations. Additionally, Campbell is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and Harvard University.

SERVICE ORDER

Presiding

Rev. Dwight Webster, PhD
Senior Pastor, Beth Eden Baptist Church, Oakland, CA

Prelude.....	Riverside Musicians
Psalm of Praise Psalm 8.....	Deacon Jonathan Holley
Songs of Praise - We've Come This Far By Faith (Albert A. Goodson).....	Riverside Choir
Songs of Praise - Breath of Heaven (Chris Eaton)	Riverside Choir
Call to Worship.....	Rev. Dwight Webster, PhD
Procession of Clergy	
Order of Worship and Announcements.....	Rev. Dwight Webster, PhD
Congregational Hymn.....	Great Is Thy Faithfulness (page 8)
Hebrew Bible Reading Isaiah 61:1-9.....	Rev. Perzavia Praylow, PhD <i>Senior Pastor, Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church Director of Contextual Theology, Howard University School of Divinity</i>
New Testament Reading Philippians 2:1-5, 12-13.....	Rev. Monica Raines <i>Senior Pastor, Christ United Methodist Church, D.C.</i>
Invocation.....	Rev. Dr. Lisa Rhodes <i>Director of R.I.S.E Women of Color in Ministry</i>
Welcome & Passing of Peace.....	Cheryl Parham, <i>Chair of Deacons</i> <i>O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of God's grace! Jesus! the name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease, 'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.</i>
Remarks from the Search Committee.....	Deacons Cheryl Parham and Laurel Eierman
Greetings from Community	Rev. Elijah Zehyoue, <i>Co-Director of the Alliance of Baptists</i> Rev. Marvin Silver, <i>Associate Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ</i> Rev. Drew Nettinga, <i>Chair of the Committee on Ministry, Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC</i> Rev. Nick Mumejian, <i>Interim Pastor 2019-2022, Senior Pastor, Lake Shore Baptist Church, Waco TX</i> Rev. Michael Bledsoe, <i>PhD, Senior Pastor, Riverside Baptist Church (1992-2019)</i>
Invitation to Offering.....	Rev. Tara Gibbs <i>Associate Pastor, Myers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC</i>

Offertory Selection - Thank You, Lord (Walter Hawkins).....Riverside Choir
Terryn Nelson, soloist

Prayer of Dedication.....Rev. Tara Gibbs

Introduction of Guest Preacher.....Rev. Bridget Kelso Anthony
Professor of Theatre and Speech, City College of New York

Musical Selection.....Min. Joshua Brian Campbell, M. Div.
Golden Globe and Academy Award-nominated composer
Director of Music and Arts at the Wake Forest School of Divinity
Director of the University Gospel Choir

Sermon.....Rev. Lisa Thompson, PhD
Associate Professor and the Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair of
Black Homiletics and Liturgics, Vanderbilt University

Song of Consecration.....Lauren White, Choir Director

ORDER OF INSTALLATION

Statement of Purpose.....Pastor Danielle Murphy
1st Assistant Pastor, The Dream Center Church of Atlanta, GA

Charge to the Pastor.....Rev. Michael A Walrond, Jr.
Senior Pastor, First Corinthian Baptist Church, New York, NY

Charge to the Congregation.....Rev. Dr. Benjamin Boswell
Senior Pastor, Myers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC

Covenant of Installation.....Rev. Dr. Cathy Gillard
Senior Pastor, Park Avenue United Methodist Church, New York, NY

Installation Prayer.....Rev. Lakeesha Walrond, PhD
President of New York Theological Seminary

Declaration.....Rev. Dwight Webster, PhD

Musical Selection.....Min. Joshua Brian Campbell, M. Div.

Keys to the Church.....Trustees of Riverside Baptist Church

Presentation of the Robe.....Riverside Search Committee

Presentation of Installed Pastor.....Riverside Deacons

Remarks.....Rev. Mia McClain
Senior Pastor, Riverside Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

Benediction.....Rev. Michael Bledsoe, PhD

Closing Song - We Are Marching, We are marching in the light of God, We are singing.. We are dancing..

Recessional - Instrumental

*Join us for a reception immediately following service,
 featuring a performance by the Dupont Brass Band.*

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

1 Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator,
there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! [Refrain]

COVENANT OF INSTALLATION

Covenant Leader:

Dear friends, Riverside Baptist Church has declared that, having gathered under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has called Rev. Mia McClain to minister in this place as pastor and teacher, and it now receives her as appointed by God for this ministry. The search committee, in conjunction with the Alliance of Baptists and with respect to the Potomac Association of the MidAtlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ, has declared that she has met all the necessary conditions for installation to this office.

Mia, seeing that you are called to ordained ministry by the grace of God and that Riverside Baptist Church has been led to call you as pastor and teacher, are you willing to enter this covenant with its members who are one in Christ with us?

Pastor:

I am willing, and I promise to serve this church faithfully, preaching and teaching the word of God, administering the sacraments, and fulfilling the pastoral office.

Covenant Leader:

Members of Riverside Baptist Church, will those who are able rise and affirm your covenant with your pastor and teacher?

Congregation:

We, the members of Riverside Baptist Church, receive Rev. Mia McClain as our pastor and teacher, promising to labor with her in the ministry of the gospel and to give her due honor and support.

We gather with her and with the Alliance of Baptists and the United Church of Christ as a sign of our mutual and ecumenical ministry in Christ's name.

Covenant Leader:

Members of the Alliance of Baptists, of the Potomac Association of the United Church of Christ, and clergy in support of the pastor and congregation, will those who are able rise and affirm your covenant with Riverside Baptist Church and its pastor and teacher?

Association, Community, and Clergy:

We gather with you, the people and the pastor and teacher of Riverside Baptist Church, as a sign of celebration of our mutual and ecumenical ministry in Christ's name.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Current Deacons of Riverside Baptist Church DC

Cheryl Parham, Chair

Laurel Eierman

Terryn Nelson

LeRoy Potts

Jonathan Holley

Margo Ferguson

Current Trustees of Riverside Baptist Church DC

Luke Wassum, Chair

Anthony Maimer, IT Development

Edward Harris

Jack White, treasurer

Etzel Ferguson

Michelle Yancey

Others

Jasmine White, Esq

Della J's Delectables

Dupont Brass Band

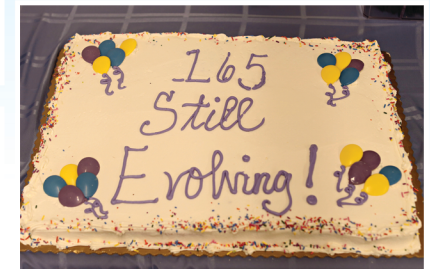
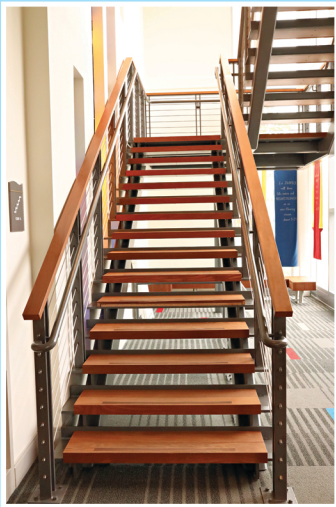
Lauren White

Riverside Choir and Musicians

Sarah Fairbrother

Rev. Mia would like to thank her cloud of witnesses—everyone who has traveled near and far to share in this occasion, those who counsel her, those who comfort her, those who call her deeper into herself.

This service is dedicated in loving memory of her beloved friends, Leo E. Jones and Gary Morris, Jr., and her grandmothers, Wilhelmenia Dillon Howard and Myrtle Brooks Bellizan.



At Riverside Baptist Church, our one law is love of God and neighbor. In this diverse community, we celebrate all identities, orientations, gender equality, and racial diversity. We draw the circle of God's love large here. Whoever you are and wherever you are on the journey, you are included. If you'd like to receive our weekly email newsletter, please email rsbc@riversidedc.org



Leadership

Rev. Mía M. McClain, Senior Pastorn| pastor@riversidedc.org

Min. Jonathan J. Holley, Outreach & Missions Coordinator | outreach@riversidedc.org

Lauren White, Choir Director | music@riversidedc.org

Sarah Fairbrother, Administrator | rsbc@riversidedc.org

Cheryl Parham, Chair of Deacons | deaconchair@riversidedc.org

Luke Wassum, Chair of Trustees | trusteechair@riversidedc.org

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