

Graduate Recognition Sunday May 17th Class of 2026

Parents of 2026 Graduates,

The Spring semester is flying by, and Graduate Recognition Sunday will be here before you know it! We can't wait to celebrate this huge milestone in the life of your student as a church family. Please read the entire email so you are aware of some upcoming deadlines. Our purpose for this special day is:

- To pray over our students as a church family and commission them for Jesus' mission.
- To help parents use this "rite of passage" moment to intentionally bless their student by highlighting areas of past spiritual growth and challenging their student towards continued spiritual growth.

Details for Graduate Recognition Worship Service and luncheon:

- We are asking parents to take time to write an intentional letter that will bless your student (instructions given below).
- Students **will not be** walking across the stage one at a time and wearing their cap & gown. We will show a video in church that honors our 2026 graduates for completing HS, and we want to celebrate as a church in a way that is distinctly different than their school graduation ceremony. At the 11:00 Worship East Service, graduates will come on stage, and we will have a pastoral charge, and prayer time commissioning them as a church family! We will not have reserved seating for graduates and families, feel free to sit wherever you would like!
- We want the luncheon to be an intentional and encouraging time for both graduates and parents! The luncheon is for immediate family members, and RSVP is required for preparations and seating purposes. RSVP for the luncheon should be included when submitting pictures.

Schedule for Sunday May 17th

9:30 Worship West and Worship East Services

11:00 Worship East Service

*The graduate recognition video will be shown in all 3 services, but the time of prayer and commissioning will take place in the 11:00 Worship East Service.

12:00 Service Dismisses

*RH Students Photo Banner in the Atrium for Family Photos

12:20 Group Photo of Graduates on Main Staircase (that leads upstairs)

12:30 Lunch in the Attic (sit together as a family)

1:30 Lunch Ends

3 Things to Do Before Graduate Recognition (Check Deadlines Below!!)

1) Pictures for Church Graduate Recognition

- Upload **ONE baby picture, and ONE senior picture by April 30th (at the latest)** for the Church-Wide Graduate Recognition video. This will be shown in all 3 services on

May 17th. If we do not receive pictures by April 30th, your student will not be in the video.

- Select photos of the Graduate only. Close up pictures with plain backgrounds are best.
- Photos should be high quality (no Facebook photos please).
- Scan photos (JPEG) and upload them in the attached Dropbox folder. Save both photos with your student's name on them (the same name you want displayed on the screen). If you are having any issues with uploading them to Dropbox, then scan and email them to angela@riverlandhills.org
- Use this link to submit pictures - [Dropbox](#)

2) RSVP for Graduate Recognition Luncheon (12:30 in Attic)

- We would love you and your immediate family to join us for our Graduate Recognition Luncheon in the Attic at 12:30 on May 17th. This is a time of fellowship and encouragement for students and their families. Space is limited so RSVP to riverlandhills.org/graduation to participate.

3) Hand-Written Letter

- Take time to write a handwritten letter to your graduate that will intentionally bless them during this rite of passage moment.
- Keep this a secret from your student and give it to them at some point on Sunday evening after Graduate Recognition. This is a meaningful and personal letter from YOU as their parent, not from THE CHURCH.
- Here are some ideas for potential topics to include in your letter:
 - **Memories:** What are some specific memories you have shared with your graduate that bring you joy as a parent? What are some memories that made you laugh?
 - **Christian Character:** What specific Christ-like character traits you have seen them grow in?
 - **Significance of their Name:** What significance does their name have? Why did you name them _____ and how has their life been a reflection of their name?
 - **Accomplishments:** What are some specific accomplishments you can point out and celebrate, beyond celebrating the fact they graduated from HS!
 - **Prayers:** Which of your prayers has God answered in your student's life in the past? What prayers are you asking God to answer in their life for the future!
 - **Plan for 1st Year beyond High School:** As parents, we know our job isn't "done" when your graduate completes high school. They still need parents who can help them process the challenges and joys of their new-found freedom and independence. In your letter, write down specific and intentional ways you plan to walk alongside your student. This may be a weekend trip you want to take with them each semester, specific dates you want to visit with them and treat them to a nice dinner, or a weekly time where you can FaceTime them! **I'm convinced that students need BOTH routine rhythms of connection with you and special shared experiences to connect with you!**