The Message of The Resurrection

Whether we openly talk about it or not, most of us understand that to be a follower of Jesus Christ is to respond to matters of life and death. Yet, when matters of life and death come into our lives, it is all too real how much we as human beings prefer not to deal with death. We do fairly well with what we know as life. Unlike death and though often unclear, matters of life seems less threatening and less ambiguous than death.

When my own father died in 1983, I found that rather than reflect on death and its meaning, I spent time reflecting more deeply on life and what it meant to really live. The Biblical story of Lazareth being raised from the dead was one of my go-to places for meditation. Encapsulated in the story are conversations between Jesus and Lazareth’s sisters. They wanted to know why Jesus hadn’t shown up earlier to save their brother from death. In one of the conversations we find Jesus responding with: “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25-26)

There are several other Bible stories wherein Jesus is found telling his mother, brothers and disciples that His hour had not come. He was not persuaded by their voices to risk His physical life before the appointed time. Yet, as the story goes, at some point a handful of Greek strangers came to see Him and suddenly, to His disciples’ surprise, He says, “Now, my hour has come. The time has come for me to be glorified.” It appears that the change, or the willingness to deal with death, came for Him, as it does for each of us, when we are prepared to renounce some present interest for the sake of a future benefit. And the great invitation in the moment is to place a higher value on eternal things than on things in the earth.

The hour of the strangers showing up in the Jesus narrative seems to be a significant mark in time. It was not 60 minutes on a timepiece. Rather, it was a season and time of fulfillment, an appointed time for an appointed action, both literally and metaphorically. It was a time of choosing between life and death — His own, as well as the life and death of all who are born into this world.

Through this life and death phenomenon, Jesus beckons our attention. He even illustrates this spiritual truth, at one point, by speaking to us of the inherent life-giving quality of a seed. From the seed, no fruitful life will come without death, and no resurrection power without surrender. It is only when a seed is planted and “dies” that it fulfills its purpose. Later, Jesus goes on to demonstrate this with His own life. He produces the fruit of our lives in Him through His death and resurrection. Thus, each time we refer to ourselves as Christian, in essence we are telling the world that we too are seed bearers. We are saying: there is God-life in me; I bear the Christ seed within; and, there is potential for the fruit of the Christ within to be manifested in my life.

So yes, on a deep level we do understand and embrace this principle of new life coming forth from death. We do value the principle of seedtime and harvest throughout all of nature. And, here we are. As this Lenten season comes to a close, and Resurrection Sunday is just around the corner, we embark upon springtime. Plants and trees are budding. New life is being revealed where only a month ago we saw death and decay. Evidence is all around us that what appears to be the end through death is often that which is truly the beginning of new life.

Embedded in the gospel message Jesus offers us is the invitation to consider this very phenomenon for our individual lives. Not only do we have the seed of Life in us through Christ Jesus, but we ourselves are seeds in the
If there is one thing I’ve learned in my short time at Richmond Hill, it’s that we gather at the table often. It’s what we do. Sharing a common meal, speaking the truth to one another, listening with open minds and hearts, sharing the Eucharist — all are integral to our formation as a community. It’s good and right.

Recently, we hosted a group sponsored by Eastern Mennonite University’s Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. They came from Greensborough, Atlanta, Chicago, Oakland, and Ferguson, Missouri, and other places to dream about what a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for this nation might look like. As you might image, the table conversations were stirring.

Tom DeWolf was among our guests that weekend and one of the conveners. Tom learned about 25 years ago that his ancestors were European slave traders. In response, he’s written two books, started a non-profit called “Coming to the Table,” and now travels extensively calling people together to dialogue on the legacy of slavery and racism, and to explore opportunities for healing.

The following Monday, Janie and I were invited to a local gathering of “Coming to the Table” with Tom and several others. We met in a home on the West End and were asked to share personal reflections on the meaning of Truth and why we thought we were at the table that day. It was an eclectic group and the sharing was sincere and moving.

After lunch we regrouped at the Library of Virginia to tour the Emancipation Through Transformation exhibit now on display. Then we met at Shockoe Bottom to learn about Lumpkin’s Jail and the sacred burial ground nearby. We were invited to imagine the area transformed into a park complete with green space, historic markers, and walking trails.

I’ve only been here a short time, but it’s clear there is a movement afoot in Richmond. God is up to something and it would appear that Richmond Hill is at the heart of it. Jesus said they’d come from every direction (Luke 13:29) and they are. And Richmond Hill is offering the hospitality for such gatherings to sit, pray, talk, listen, and be fed. It’s a place, too, that inspires and encourages each of us to step out in faith with purpose and resolve.

The table is ready and waiting. Come.

Rev. Joel Blunk
Co-Pastoral Director

RICHMOND

Come to the Table

TENDING THE SPIRIT

earth. We have life to give. Christ in us remains the Hope of glory. Every time we give up something, or say no to something, in order to say yes to Christ, we take seriously the message of the Resurrection. We consider the exponential growth that will produce a great spiritual harvest for the future when we are able to die to ourselves.

This message of the Resurrection is an important one to hold on to because “All of creation waits with eager longing for the manifestation of the children of God.” (Romans 8:18) It is an important one to remember also because the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in Metropolitan Richmond, which we pray for each and every day, is contingent upon each of us living our lives as evidence of the truth and reality of the resurrection in us. It is our opportunity to live life “loving God and loving our neighbor as ourself.”

Now that we live on the other side of The Resurrection, as a people gathered in Christ’s resurrection power, we can surmise that our Lord did indeed look beyond the suffering of death to the harvest of a redeemed humanity and to the joy of life that was set before us.

The message of The Resurrection is about Life indeed. Hallelujah!

Rev. Janie M. Walker, Co-Pastoral Director

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Metro Richmond at Prayer

Pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

March 6, 2016. We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of love, cooperation, peace, community, and commitment to all people in God’s name.

March 13, 2016. We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: To remove any spirit of contentiousness, prejudice, greed, jealousy, or enjoyment of others’ troubles; for spiritual renewal, leading to prayer and care for all regardless of race, national origin, religion, income, or neighborhood.

March 20, 2016. We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of justice, righteousness, equality, and mutual benefit.

March 27, 2016 (Easter Sunday). We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of hope, of possibility, of eternal life, and of commitment to the redeeming power of God who brings new life out of death to people and communities.

Available Now from the Richmond Hill Bookstore

Richmond’s Unhealed History
by Benjamin Campbell

Ben’s book is available in a Kindle version for $5.99 at Amazon.com

$15.95 plus tax at Richmond Hill
$18.50 postpaid, tax included, by mail from Richmond Hill.

Leadership In Action
Celebrating a Legacy

February was Black History Month. ALP students celebrated the Life and Legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by participating in the Richmond Peace Education Center (RPEC) “Generation Dream” Edu-concert. The Edu-concert was a huge success with students from various schools performing the Street Theater piece titled “I AM” bringing awareness against gun violence in the community. Some of our students were featured in the segment Virginia Currents. (you can see it here: http://www.rpec.org/generation-dream-featured-on-virginia-currents/)

Additionally, prior to the concert, ALP invited students from the Armstrong Priorities Freshman Academy for dinner was held at a local African-American owned business. Students were able to gain first hand knowledge of what it takes to start and manage a business, while learning a bit of Armstrong High School’s 150th history (established in 1865) which is being celebrated throughout this year.

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men” — Frederick Douglass

Yvette Rajput, Director & Marvin Roane, Assistant Director
CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

Tuesdays, 4:45 - 5:45 p.m.
Deborah Streicker, Facilitator

Tuesdays, 7:30 - 8:45 p.m.
Jerry Deans, Rev. Valerie King, Facilitators

Centering prayer is an ancient prayer method designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer by preparing us to cooperate with this gift. Each group is open to newcomers regardless of experience.

Contact Deborah Streicker at 783-7903 or dstreicker@richmondhillva.org

DROP-IN GRIEF GROUP

Monthly, 4th Fridays, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
Sandy Gramling, Ph.D., Facilitator

Share experiences and obtain support from others who are experiencing a loss in a flexible group format. Discussion and reflection on the impact of loss, coping, meaning-making, etc. follows the brief presentation.

Preregistration is helpful but not required. Contact Deborah Cannady at 804-783-7903 to register.

LISTENING TO THE SILENCE

Second Tuesday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Arrive at Richmond Hill at 8:45 to begin this spiritual experience. Lunch and chapel are included. Bring your Bible and your journal but leave the cell phone in the car.

Suggested Donation: $20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Rita Ricks, spiritual director

Contact Deborah Cannady at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

Please register in advance. Space is limited.

“Pray without ceasing” — 1 Thessalonians, 5:17

Do you have a favorite scripture that gives you hope or that you read for inspiration? Do you ever want to share words of courage and strength with others but can’t find the right cards or words?

Come for a day where you can tap into your own creative spirit as you make a Message of Hope for another or yourself. You can decorate your own works of art to help others on their journey using your favorite Bible verse, poem, prayer or your own personal message of hope.

Bookmarkers, prayer strips, prayer cards, prayer lists are just some of the many ways you can express your message to another. Your personal creation is a wonderful way to send a message of hope, courage, or inspiration to another. It is also a great way to deepen your own prayer life and to be open to God through the creative process.

Suggested donation: $30 per person.

Contact: Deborah Cannady at 783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

Note: You can participate in the activity described above or you can also bring your own project to work on and supplies.
Urban Spirituality 2016-2017

Now Enrolling

RUAH XV
School of Spiritual Guidance

New Class Begins in
September 2016 for Clergy
& Church Professionals

Richmond Hill will begin a new
weekday session of the RU Ahmed
School of Spiritual Guidance in
September, 2016.

This weekday design is particularly
intended to make the program avail-
able to clergy and other church profes-
sionals for whom Sunday classes are
impossible.

The two-year program is composed
of two 48-hour retreats and eight 24-
hour retreats for each of two years. The
24-hour retreats are held on the third
Monday evening and Tuesday each
month; the 48-hour retreats extend
from Monday supper through
Wednesday.

The program consists of monthly
retreats in the context of the rhythm of
life of the Richmond Hill Community.
Prayer and faith sharing are a part of
the discipline of all participants. Books
are assigned each month on the
upcoming topic.

Acceptance in RU Ahmed XV is prima-
rily limited to clergy and church profes-
sionals. If you are interested in this
program, please inquire immediately
to the Rev. Janie Walker.

The deadline for applications is
May 1. Some scholarship assistance is
available.

For more information or an application,
please contact Rev. Janie Walker,
Interim Pastoral Director, at Richmond Hill.
(804)783-7903 or email:
jwalker@richmondhillva.org

Vocare means to call or to summon.
This school is intended to provide
tools, space, and community for dis-
cerning God’s call in each of our lives.

Fall Tuesday Workshops: Tuesday
workshops are designed to move you
from your personal inner-work
towards outward engagement with
the wider community.

Spring Discernment Groups: These
groups meet monthly. The
meetings will take place on the last
Tuesday of each month. Each session
will provide opportunity for a partic-
ipant to discern vocation in commu-
nity as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Applications are due May 1.
To inquire or apply, please contact Rev. Janie
Walker at (804-783-7903) or email:
jwalker@richmondhillva.org

Urban Service Corps

The Richmond Hill Urban Service
Corps provides a rare opportuni-
ty to gain understanding of how
the Holy Spirit engages with both the
people and the social structures of a
City as well as how the life of
a Christian community can
provide a powerful witness
for the possibilities of recon-
ciliation and healing in a
metropolitan area.

The Richmond Hill Urban Service
Corps is a one year commitment begin-
ing in August of each year. Typically, we
will have four servant-leaders in the
Community per year.

Applications are due to Richmond
Hill by May 1.

To inquire or apply, please contact
Rev. Janie Walker at (804) 783-7903 or
jwalker@richmondhillva.org

Holy Week at
Richmond Hill

March 22 - March 24, 2016

Join us for silent retreat from 7a.m. Morning prayer through 6 p.m.
Evening prayer, Tuesday through Thursday of Holy Week,
for prayer, study, and meditation. Come for any or all of the time.
A simple lunch will be served each day following mid-day prayer.

Good Friday Vigil, March 25

12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m. Simple lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Donations appreciated
Need and supply

R

gardless where we are God gives us the ability to see the world as He designed it. Whether we are astounded by the Grand Canyon or warmed by a summer’s breeze the earth reveals to us many aspects of our Creator. Most of all the wonders of what we see and experience tells us of the Father’s everlasting care and concern for that which He has created. We are blessed to have food to eat a place to live and clothes to wear. Most of us have jobs, families and friends. We have places to worship and areas to service. We have talents and blessings in abundance. Our hearts should be filled with thanksgiving. We should praise the Lord.

We are taking better care of our bodies these days. Most people are eating better, exercising, monitoring their cholesterol and fat intake and watching their weight. Today we are better prepared to handle the challenges we face in our busy lives. May we take a look at our spiritual lives? Are we exercising our faith? Let us monitor what goes on in our mind and what words come out of our mouth: “Build your strength in union with the Lord by the means of His mighty power.” (Ephesians 6:10).

Each of us have different tools to build a life. We are also given the ability to color that life however we please. We can color it dark and gloomy or we can paint it with a rainbow of love. God placed a rainbow in the sky as promised: “When the rainbow appears in the clouds I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth.” (Genesis 9:16). The rainbow can line our hearts as a reminder of our covenant with God. Are we painting rainbows or clouds?

A garden does not grow by accident. Weeds grow naturally but beautiful gardens require hard work and dedication. While weeds of our sin nature multiply freely the good is threatened if not nurtured and encouraged to grow. We cannot sit back in our Christian walk and believe that we will grow simply because we go to church once a week. Growth must be planted for it to occur. Our cry must be as the Psalmist’s: “O God You are my God and I long for you. My whole being desire you like a dry, worn out and waterless land my soul is thirsty for You.”(Psalms 63:1). Let us be eager.

It is not necessary that we see Him as supplying all our personal needs. The weak need strength. The strong need tenderness. The tempted and fallen need Your Salvation. The righteous need Your pity for sinners. The lonely need a friend. The fighter need a Leader. No human can be all these: “And with all His abundant wealth through Christ Jesus My God will supply all your needs.” (Philippians 4:19).

Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris
Pastoral Counselor
As a community we pray for the needs of metropolitan Richmond each day, three times a day. But we also offer two prayer services, where all are invited to come to receive prayer for inner healing and/or illnesses.

In the Soaking Prayer service, you can come and sit in chairs or comfortably on the floor in the peace of the chapel. If you choose, you can write on a card whatever concern or issue you may have. A short meditation is offered, soft music is played and healing prayer ministers will come to you and pray for you. All is done in the peacefulness of the space; no prayers are spoken aloud during this time. You can allow yourself to rest in the prayers of others and allow the Lord to fill you with His peace by His Spirit and be renewed.

Our other service is more specific for it addresses the healing of the generations. The Generational Healing service with Eucharist (Communion) is an opportunity to invite God’s healing into your family, including the generations who have before and the generations who will come after you. We pray for the blessings of gifts in the family. We pray for the healing of those secrets and broken areas with the family. We pray for the release of the influence of those negative traits that can be noticed as being passed down from generation to generation. We reaffirm our belief in the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit and repent of our sins as we choose to be in a place of intercession for the family. The blessings and the pains that we see as patterns in the family history are written down, but never shared with anyone.

If you are drawn to either or both of these services, please come. Soaking Prayer is held on the 4th Monday evening at 7:30 pm and the 1st Thursday morning at 10:00 am. The Generational Healing service is offered on the 5th Monday at 7:30 pm.

Be free to be all that God created you to be.

Deborah Cannady
Healing Prayer Minister

Traffic

Our spiritual life can be like driving home in traffic. We want to get to our destination quickly and we want a smooth, straight ride with no bumps or curves in the road. But just as we hit the open road ahead, someone pulls out in front of us or won’t let us merge. Then there is road construction, the road is closed, a sign says go another way. People drive slower than we’d like causing us slow down, delaying our arrival. Worse yet, the light turns red and we have to stop, now waiting even longer. So much interference and time lost in our drive home.

Just like struggling on our way home in traffic, too much gets in the way of our spiritual intentions and practices. We want and need to be closer to our God. We want to hear him in the silence, to pray, to walk daily our intended path. But we are slowed down, detoured so we don’t take time to sit with or listen for God, our true love and desire. We are lost in all of the exterior demands of life and pay little attention and less time nourishing our inner life, or being with God our creator.

Traffic IS life and things do happen. How we respond to all that occurs, and what we learn from the twists and turns are what define us and can ready us for whatever enters our lives next. God is always right with us, ready to be present, to lead and guide us every moment, even while we wait at the red light. Ask, believe, and hold on to the true steering wheel of life and look in and steadfastly go forward with faith and hope. Be guided by that inner voice, that intuition, that knowingness inside. God is there ready to answer and guide each of us from within. As we drive through the demanding traffic in our daily lives, slow down. Breathe. Listen. Drive on trusting his light and love for you, your God within.

Brenda Giannini
Dean, Ruah XIV
March 2016

Metro Richmond at Prayer

In March:

Pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond.

Share your comments, or sign up to receive our monthly UPDATE newsletter by emailing us your contact information: rrumble@richmondhillva.org

Richmond Hill is an ecumenical Christian fellowship and intentional residential community who serve as stewards of an urban retreat center within the setting of a historic monastery. Our Mission is to seek God’s healing of Metropolitan Richmond through prayer, hospitality, racial reconciliation and spiritual development.

RICHMOND HILL’S DAILY CYCLE OF PRAYER

Pray for Metropolitan Richmond Every Day: For the healing of metropolitan Richmond; for the sick and those in our hearts; for the welfare of all our citizens; for the establishment of God’s order in our community.

MONDAYS: Our citizens who live in the City of Richmond, the Mayor, Manager, City Council, and School Board. Non-profit organizations and their ministries. All schools: students, teachers, and staff. Day care centers. All who suffer from addiction, dependency, and co-dependency. The Council, residents, and staff of Richmond Hill.

TUESDAYS: Our citizens who live in Hanover County, the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and Manager. The print and broadcast media. The churches of metropolitan Richmond: members and clergy. All who live in poverty. All who suffer from mental illness.

WEDNESDAYS: The Governor of Virginia, the General Assembly, and all who work in State Government. All who work in businesses which provide services to others. All who work in construction. Hospitals and nursing homes: patients, residents, and staff; all who provide health care. Victims of violent crime; all who commit violent crime. All senior citizens.

THURSDAYS: Our citizens who live in Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg, the town and city Councils and Managers. All who work in banks and finance; all making financial decisions for greater Richmond. Prisons and jails of metropolitan Richmond; prisoners and staff. All who are unemployed or underemployed. All public servants.

FRIDAYS: Our citizens who live in Henrico County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in the manufacturing industry in metropolitan Richmond. The police, fire, and rescue workers. The courts. All young people. All who hurt, need inner healing, or are unable to love.

SATURDAYS: Our citizens who live in Chesterfield County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in retail trade in metropolitan Richmond, and those who own our businesses. Counselors and spiritual directors. The Sisters of the Visitation of Monte Maria. All victims of abuse; all perpetrators of abuse.

SUNDAYS: Our citizens who live in the Counties of Charles City, Goochland, Powhatan, and New Kent, the Supervisors, School Boards, and Managers. An end to racism and racial prejudice. All places of prayer or worship: churches, mosques, and synagogues. Universities, colleges, and technical schools. All who seek God.

We pray daily at Richmond Hill for persons or situations for which our prayers are requested. Call us at 804-783-7903.

Help with the healing
metro-richmond-at-prayer.org

Show your support with a Metro Richmond at Prayer bumper sticker
Order online:
www.metroprayrva.org
or call (804)783-7903.