The call

While on sabbatical the spring of 2009, I retreated on the isle of Iona in the western Hebrides of Scotland. There, I learned of “A Geadh-Glas,” the wild goose, a symbol for the Holy Spirit in the Celtic Christian tradition. Wild geese frequent the island to nest; they are untamed, free spirits on that modest yet rugged land. Poet Mary Oliver writes that we are beckoned like the call of the wild geese, “harsh and exciting - over and over announcing our place in the family of things.”

God calls us, again and again, to an adventurous life. It may sound odd to put it that way, but we need only look at Jesus’ example. In him we see faithfulness equated with a willingness to face challenge, take risks, trust in love. Jesus didn’t sit idly. Instead, he engaged the world, bringing healing and hope, inviting us to do the same. Reminding us that “of the one to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48).”

April of last year, I received a call from a friend in Richmond. I was living in central Pennsylvania at the time and we hadn’t spoken to or seen each other in a number of years. After exchanging pleasantries, he explained that he was calling to tell me about Richmond Hill. “The community is looking for a new co-pastoral director,” he told me, “and the type of work you are doing now seems well suited for this moment in Richmond Hill’s history.”

April of last year, I received a call from a friend in Richmond. I was living in central Pennsylvania at the time and we hadn’t spoken to or seen each other in a number of years. After exchanging pleasantries, he explained that he was calling to tell me about Richmond Hill. “The community is looking for a new co-pastoral director,” he told me, “and the type of work you are doing now seems well suited for this moment in Richmond Hill’s history.”

At the time, I served as an associate pastor working with adults to deepen their faith and find that place where, in the words of writer and theologian Frederick Buechner, their “deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Along with some talented colleagues, we were hosting retreats, facilitating small group discussions, teaching spiritual practices and inspiring one another toward more engaged lives in the world. Energized by the work, I wasn’t actively seeking a change. Yet I felt compelled to explore Richmond Hill further.

I was put in touch with then interim pastoral director Janie Walker and we began a conversation. She was clear in describing that entering into the Richmond Hill community was a discernment process, one that would unfold in God’s time. Was God calling me to something new? The change in circumstance and locale would be dramatic — a major downsizing from the long-time home where we’d raised our family, a move from a small, idyllic college town to a metropolitan and unknown city, entering into intentional residential life.

Within a few weeks, Kristen, my partner of 28 years, was on a business trip in Petersburg and decided on the spur of the moment to stop at Richmond Hill. She didn’t know the address, but as she tells it, it was as if someone else had taken the wheel and directed her to 2209 East Grace Street. She was greeted warmly and openly. She wandered through the bookstore and then out into the garden. Soon she was sitting alone in the chapel looking up at the words, “Unless the Lord watches over the city...” Overcome, she began to weep.

Within a month or so, we returned together to meet Janie in person. What followed were a series of uncanny coincidences confirming the need to take seriously the possibility that God may be bringing us together. Looking through the bookstore window, the first book I saw was the one I was reading at that time, *Wisdom Jesus* by Cynthia Bourgeault. I had it with me in the car. The Book of Common Worship, used at prayer, was the same book I’d used often in my own devotional practice. On subsequent trips to Richmond Hill we unexpectedly encountered people we knew, recognized, or had at one time or another crossed paths with.

Discernment continued with the help of the Richmond Hill council, Janie, friends back home in Pennsylvania, my spiritual director of 20 years, and prayer. A formal interview followed and a couple more trips to visit sustained the call.

At one point, I stood in the Richmond Hill labyrinth unable to move. The path before me, though well marked, seemed unknown, uncertain, unclear. My life back in State College was predictable and safe. Comfortable. I felt small in that moment, the work of Richmond Hill expansive. Though I believe that God calls us to wider circles, I wanted to turn around. Depth psychologist Bill Plotkin writes that a true call often feels like a compelling need to walk into the belly of a whale or into the storm, though our first inclination may be to run in the opposite direction, or at the very least stay put.

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Entering community isn’t to be taken lightly and was, perhaps, the hardest part of our decision. We were helped by the wise words of one of your Richmond Hill elders who, in my discernment interview, when I asked, “How does one knows they are ready to enter into intentional commu-
Intergenerational Collaboration

For days now, I have contemplated the goodness and hope I find in young adults all over metropolitan Richmond who are engaging in meaningful ways to strengthen our communities. At the same time, I see older adults taking a step back to make space for young adults to step forward. This intergenerational collaboration has not always been a consistent theme in our history. However, in recent months it appears to be done with a new-found intentionality. Call it a spirit of revival if you will. It is ultimately rejuvenating to see passionate young people responding directly and succinctly to matters of concern for themselves personally and for the good of their community, without interference.

If I were to call the young people I see each by name, or the causes they represent, I would surely miss someone or some cause. I trust they know who they are and that each of them is as important to the regeneration of metropolitan Richmond as the other. So, as I continued my inward struggle to find the right words to express my gratitude and hopefulness for the new life I see emerging, a young man stood up in the midst of the congregation gathered to address the “School to Prison Pipeline.” He spoke about the difference between creativity and imagination, and the role of each in the life of youth. He spoke also about adults’ need to listen to young people and refrain from having the same dialogues about adults’ need to listen to young people and refrain from having the same dialogues about adults’ need to listen to young people and refrain from having the same dialogues about adults’ need to listen to young people and refrain from having the same dialogues about adults’ need to listen to young people.

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Further confirmation came my first morning here. I woke early in our new living space in the Adams Taylor house to a variety of sounds. I’d camped alone on the floor the night before, Kristen away on a business trip. I listened: the train whistles and the steady whine of traffic on 95. One sound resounded above them all, and I suppose I shouldn’t have been surprised — that of a wild goose. On this, the highest hill in the city, she flew by my window at eye level, her call yet another sign of God’s presence here at Richmond Hill and further confirmation that I’m right where I need to be.

Rev. Joel Blunk,
Co-Pastoral Director
Pray for Health in Metropolitan Richmond.

Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” (Matthew 11:4-5)

April 3, 2016. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For persons living with HIV/AIDS and for their families, friends, and communities; for persons working to find a cure.

April 10, 2016. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For all the sick and their caregivers, doctors, nurses, hospice workers, home healthcare workers, and all who minister to the health of others. For clinics, medical personnel, and all institutions that serve persons who are uninsured or underinsured.

April 17, 2016. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For emergency response personnel and all emergency room staff. For hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice programs; and for persons diagnosed with terminal illness.

April 24, 2016. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For the full restoration of health, wellness, and well being to all people residing in our metropolitan community.

Koinonia means sharing in community. This School of Race and Justice provides safe space and tools to address racism in ourselves and to build justice in our city.

Lecture Topics include: History, diversity, shame, grief, lament, privilege, class, poverty, media, and law.

Process Groups: These intentional small groups process each lecture personally and its implications for the city.

Retreats: The retreats are designed to build community and delve deeper into our issues of race.

The deadline for applications is June 1. Cost: $1200. Some scholarship is available. For further information, please contact Rev. Janie Walker (804-783-7903), email: jwalker@richmondhillva.org

Monday, April 25 at 7:30 pm

Finding Grace in Race. This lecture is about uncovering and breaking down the code words embedded in today’s media coverage and how bias helps contribute to racial divides.


Join us for worship at 5:30 pm, dinner at 6:30 pm, lecture at 7:30 pm. Your donation of $20 includes both dinner and the lecture.

Contact DeBorah Cannady at retreats@richmondhillva.org or by phone at 804-783-7903 to register.

This lecture is provided by the Koinonia School of Race & Justice at Richmond Hill.
**Retreats**

**Individual Retreats**
Richmond Hill offers individual retreats for persons who desire rest and time to seek God. Retreats may be taken in 24-hr increments between Mon. 4 p.m.– Sat. 4 p.m. In addition, more formal contemplative retreats are offered periodically on weekends for individuals who wish to be a part of a facilitated retreat rhythm. Spiritual guidance is available for any individual retreat.

Recommended donations: Basic $65 per 24 hrs. / Guided $90 per 24 hrs.
Contact Deborah Cannady, 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

**First Friday Retreats**
First Friday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
A day for quiet reflection and spiritual renewal. Structure and guidance will be provided for those who want it as well as the option for one-on-one spiritual direction, or you can simply spend the day in silence—your choice.

Suggested Donation: $20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Mimi Weaver, spiritual director and life coach. She can be reached at www.GraceMoves.com
Contact DeBorah Cannady at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org
Please register in advance. Space is limited.

**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.

**Groups**

**Centering Prayer Groups**
Tuesdays, 4:45 - 5:45 p.m.
Deborah Streicker, Facilitator
Tuesdays, 7:30 - 8:45 p.m.
Jerry Deans, Rev. Vallerie 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 Cannady 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.

**Workshop: Prayer, Spiritual Journaling and Art**

This retreat is about spending time in quiet reflection, prayer, or meditation while listening for God in your life.

This time of prayer can be guided or on your own as long as you remain in silence. At a designated time you will be asked to journal about your private prayer experience. What were your thoughts, insights, or inspirations? What did you sense or learn in your time of silence? Once you have written all you want to say, sit with your words and visualize them in a colorful design or image. How would your reflection expressed in your words look as a work of art?

Come and enjoy for a day the beauty and the sacred space of Richmond Hill. Pray, Write, Create.

Brenda Gianinni, facilitator. Suggested donation $30. includes lunch and art materials, (note: you may want to bring your own journal).
Sign-up: DeBorah Cannaday at 804-783-7903, or email: retreats@richmondhillva.org
RUOH 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 RUOH School of Spiritual Guidance in September, 2016.

This weekday design is particularly intended to make the program available to clergy and other church professionals 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 RUOH XV is primarily limited to clergy and church professionals. 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, Co-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 discerning 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 small groups meet monthly. The meetings will take place on the last Tuesday of each month. Each session will provide opportunity for a participant to discern vocation in community 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 opportunity 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 reconciliation and healing in a metropolitan area.

The Richmond Hill Urban Service Corps is a one year commitment beginning 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 j walker@richmondhillva.org

THE GIFT OF MUSIC

Friday, May 6 – Sunday, May 8

RVA East End Festival 2016 hopes to Give $100,000 Gift of Music to Thousands of Students in Richmond’s East End

The festival is intended to attract thousands of people from throughout the region over the course of the weekend. Local restaurants, vendors, businesses and non-profits will also be featured.

Festival admittance is free and open to the public.

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RVA EAST END FESTIVAL

Chimborazo Park
**DAILY PRAYERS**
Morning 7:00 - 7:30 A.M.
Noon 12:00 - 12:15 P.M.
Evening 6:00 - 6:15 P.M.

**COMMUNITY WORSHIP**
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Every Monday
The community celebrates Holy Communion. Services are led by ministers of various denominations according to their traditions. We invite you to join us afterwards for dinner in the refectory.

**PRAYING WITH THE SONGS OF TAIZÉ**
**Leader:** Jim Bennett

7:30 p.m. first Monday of each month
Taizé worship is contemplative and meditative in character, using short songs, repeated again and again in a candle lit chapel. Using just a few words, the songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over many times, the hope is this reality will gradually penetrate one’s whole being. Meditative singing thus becomes a way of listening to God.

We invite you to participate in our practice of Taizé which includes singing, prayer for Metropolitan Richmond, and a period of silence. Jim Bennett is a skilled musician and leads this time of worship with a variety of musical instruments.

**SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE**
DeBorah Cannady, Leader
3rd Mondays at 7:30 p.m. and 1st Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.
Those struggling with illness have benefitted from being “soaked in prayer” over periods of time. Prayer ministers are available to pray with those desiring emotional, spiritual, or physical healing. Participants are invited to find a comfortable place, sit, relax, and receive prayer. Participants may also come and go during the service.

**EUCHARIST FOR GENERATIONAL HEALING**
5th Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a Eucharist for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God’s healing into your family, including the generations that have gone before and the generations that will come after you. Please bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of your ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). For more information call DeBorah Cannady at 783-7903.

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**CREATING PATHWAYS THROUGH GRIEF**
A Day Retreat
9:00 am – 4:00 pm, Friday, May 13

**Activities include:**
- Collage (Vision Board)
- Writing (various exercises)
- Create a Mandala

The expressive arts have long been helpful in processing our grief. It is often restorative to bypass the intellect and work with our hands and heart. We can express our grief and find new insights about the journey. People are often amazed by what unfolds from their creative efforts. The retreat also includes an opportunity to share what has been created with other retreatants. Other expressive art opportunities will also be available including a dream work exercise, a choice of various writing exercises and an art for “stuck points” in the grief journey exercise.

**Facilitator:** Sandy Gramling, Ph.D., Spiritual Director and Coordinator of Grief Ministries at Richmond Hill.

**Suggested donation:** $20.00 (includes lunch)

**To register,** please contact DeBorah Cannady, at (804) 783-7903 or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

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**A 24-hr. Retreat | May 14, Saturday, 4 pm – May 15, Sunday, 4 pm**

This retreat is about spending time in quiet reflection, prayer, or meditation while listening for God in your life. This time of prayer can be guided or on your own as long as you remain in silence. Come and enjoy for a day the beauty and the sacred space of Richmond Hill.

**David Vinson,** facilitator. **Suggested donation $90**

**To register,** please contact DeBorah Cannady, at (804) 783-7903 or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

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6
Faith

This is a lack of our faith to know how to get the things we need in our life. We need to pray for more as a thirsty human pray in a desert in a desert for rain. With faith help comes swift and strong. Our faith in God should be strong. It should be so strong knowing that God never forsake us. We are to be as sure as we are of our breathing. As long as we are healthy we are not aware of our breathing. It comes natural. We must trust as much as we trust our mother and father or our very best friend who us standing on the road and need help.

Faith allows us to pray daily that our faith increases. We must pray for unquestioning faith that does require proof or evidence. God created us to an act of acknowledging the existence of a Supreme and the reality of a Divine order. We need the acceptance as real or true that which is not supported by evidence of sense of by rational proof, as affirmative response of the will of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is compounded by belief, trust and an attitude of mind, will or Spirit. Jesus expresses faith in terms as the first condition for entering the kingdom of God. We hold to that faith as a prerequisite for the miracle of healing physically, mentally and spiritually. Faith brings to human a union with God through Jesus Christ. Faith comes by deposit of God’s Grace in the heart of the believers.

The writer of the Gospel of Matthew helps gives Jesus’s analogy of faith: “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more than they? Which of you by worry about can add more value then they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and I say to you that neither toil nor spin; yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more cloth you, O you of little faith?” (Matthew 6:25-30).


Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris
Pastoral Counselor

First thing

As I looked out my back window this morning I opened my heart to God in prayer. A small and beautiful cardinal, first landing on the fence then dropping down to the ground to feed, visited me. Seconds later I hear the morning dove sending out her love in song. My heart is already nearly full when I notice the trees in my backyard view standing tall, with their crooked limbs and covered in vines, reaching up to the blue sky. Their arms are wide open to catch and hold the sun. I can hardly hold this beauty and wonder playing out in front of me. I say thank you to the creatures and trees and to God I say, “Eucharisteo.”

God shines his love and light in and through his children every day hoping we will receive it and light up too letting his gifts shine through. Just like the sun shines on all trees whether in forests or gardens, pruned or twisted, young or old, God shines his love on all of his children every day unconditionally. We just need to be more like his trees, turning our face and hearts to our creator God and raise our arms up to receive his love blessing. We love God back by doing so and by loving all of his creation-- one another and all in nature. There is a gift in every moment for us to receive and an opportunity to return our love for that gift by being present and grateful. Eucharisteo.

Brenda Giannini
Dean, Ruah XIV
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.