Passed the Baton

Just a few months ago when anticipating the change of leadership in our nation's most prominent role, conversations about the climate of our nation became commonplace. Since January 20th, when President Barak Obama passed the baton of presidency to our 45th President, Donald Trump, such concern permeates nearly every conversation. It leaves me wondering if passing the baton is an appropriate metaphor for the exchange. The metaphor commonly refers to a comparison between Life and a Relay Race. I suppose a 400-meter relay race is indeed a powerful metaphor to consider when examining what the exchange might mean to the citizens of this country and our nation's relationships around the world.

Basic guidelines for a 400-meter race help us to understand that the baton is only passed to: contenders in the race; those who have been present for the practices; and those who understand that the objective of the race is to keep the baton moving in a forward direction. The objective is never about any single runner or team position. Typically, the runners are compelled to: practice in all of the positions on the team in order to allow for more flexibility; practice until the handover of the baton becomes instinctual; learn to trust one another to make the best exchange possible, even under pressure. Ultimately, the last runner is carefully chosen because there is no one else left to whom the baton can be passed. The last runner tends to be an adrenaline runner who maintains a form that enables them to hit the finish line at full speed.

Consequently, it behooves each new president to view himself or herself as a last runner. It also behooves each citizen of this nation to consider the baton we are challenged to take hold of and what it means for each of us to take up that baton in our own time. President Obama gave us a good sense of what it might mean in his farewell speech:

"For 240 years, our nation's call to citizenship has given work and purpose to each new generation. It's what led patriots to choose republic over tyranny, pioneers to trek west, slaves to brave that makeshift railroad to freedom. It's what pulled immigrants and refugees across oceans and the Rio Grande, pushed women to reach for the ballot, and powered workers to organize. It's why GIs gave their lives at Omaha Beach and Iwo Jima; Iraq and Afghanistan — and why men and women from Selma to Stonewall were prepared to give theirs as well. So that's what we mean when we say America is exceptional.... All of this depends on our participation; on each of us accepting the responsibility of citizenship; regardless of which way the pendulum of power swings."

On January 21st close to a million women marched in Washington demonstrating their commitment to citizenship and remaining vigilant against oppression of any kind. Watching clips, each speaker I heard conveyed a determination to: upholding laws relevant to moving forward as a nation, making lives better and not worse; defending our democratic process, which ensures equal opportunity and access to all; ensuring that the game is not fixed against particular people groups.

All who have made such a resolve express the first and foremost requirement to receiving the baton - you must be in the race. No need to draw back in fear. If you falter or drop the baton, according to the guidelines, it does not disqualify the runner. You need only to pick it up and keep moving forward. The challenge though is to rise above individualism and become a member of the team, a broader community — a Beloved Community.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a strong proponent of the Beloved Community, more than sixty years ago, delivered an address at the 94th Anniversary Celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation entitled, Facing the Challenge of A New Age. Dr. King said in that message: "The struggle is
not over.... For we have come a long, long way it is true, but we have a long, long way to go. And we ask for your continued prayers.... I want to try to talk about something that I hope will serve as a ray of hope to all of us as we work together for our first-class citizenship.... It is an exciting age, filled with hope....We stand today between two worlds: the dying old and the emerging new. Now I am aware of the fact that there are those who would contend that we stand in the most ghastly period of human history.”

It is in our own time that we must remember that hope is always before us; though some would deem the most ghastly period of American history. If Dr. King were here today, he would likely remind us, as he did the audience that day, “this is a momentous time, filled with the hope of something new, even amidst that which appears ugly and difficult, and as uprisings and discontentment spread across the world.”

I can imagine that Dr. King might even bring to mind some of the concluding words of President Obama’s farewell speech: “It falls to each of us to be those joyful, anxious guardians of democracy; to embrace the joyous tasks we have been given to continually try to improve this great nation of ours. Because for all our outward differences, we all share the same great nation of ours. Because for all our unutterable differences, we all share the same proud title: Citizen.”

You may find it difficult to embrace the challenge to get in the race, or stay in the race, from a citizenship perspective. I would venture to put us in remembrance of a spiritual challenge to the followers of Christ that was put forth over two thousand years ago, “…let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.” (Heb 12: 1b-2a NAB).

Rev. Janie M. Walker
Co-Pastoral Director

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**Pray for the Coming of God’s Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond.**

Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10)

**February 5, 2017.** We pray for the coming of God’s Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of unity and cooperation among all people in all jurisdictions. Fill us with your compassion for our natural environment. We pray that all would earnestly seek the common welfare of this metropolitan city.

**February 12, 2017.** We pray for the coming of God’s Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy economic development, which enhances the Metropolitan community, employs the unemployed, and contributes to the common good.

**February 19, 2017.** We pray for the coming of God’s Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond: For redemption of the divisions, prejudices, pettiness, despair, and discrimination of the past.

**February 26, 2017.** We pray for the coming of God’s Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond: For enhancement of our common life in Jesus’ Name through the Holy Spirit, and for the resurrection of metropolitan Richmond as a modern metropolitan city of hope for the world.

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[A New Year Filled With Promise](#)

The Armstrong Leadership Program began the new year with renewed hope for a bright future and promise of our student leaders. During the winter break, it was such a blessing to see so many of 2016 graduates at our annual Alumni Luncheon. The gathering brings together our recent graduating class to share ideas, experiences and most of all fellowship. The students were excited to reconnect with one another and shared exciting news of their freshman college experiences and life.

Lydell Poag, a recent graduate now attending Old Dominion University stopped in to share with current students a very informative 20-minute presentation on the Do’s and Don’ts of attending college as a freshman. The sharing of experiences is at the heart of the program, which develops and strengthens our bonds and supports the family atmosphere and overall connectivity. This process allows students the opportunity to share, taking pride in the role and giving the opportunity to give back to their community. Additionally, our students participated in a session on Goal Setting, Time Management and The Healing Box. These activities are critical to reinforcing and developing skills, values, healing and reconciliation, while placing a strong emphasis on starting a new year with motivation and organization.

We began the New Year with “Tutoring on Tuesdays,” providing much needed math tutorial assistance for our students. The subject areas include: Geometry, Algebra I and II, Calculus and Trigonometry. The second phase of the program will begin in the second and third weeks of the month with peer tutoring. Students will assist one another and a variety of subjects while earning community service hours. We would like to thank Dr. Steven Powelson for volunteering his time to tutor our students in math.

Lastly, we would like to thank our many volunteers, mentors and supporters who offer time, energy and resources to the success of our program. We want to let you know that your efforts are appreciated! Peace & Blessing — Ms. Yvette and Mr. Marvin

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK @ ARMSTRONGLEADERSHIP

Learn more about Armstrong Leadership Program through Yvette Rajput at 804-783-7903, ext. 13, or, alp@richmondhillva.org

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[Micah Association News](#)

The Micah Association met Thursday, November 10 at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church with special focus on Overby Sheppard Elementary School. Assistant RPS Superintendent Abe Jeffers, who oversees OSES, offered remarks about the school and the work being done on behalf of students by RPS. Principal Kara Lancaster-Gay focused her remarks on the importance of “Resilience” and used a power point to give specific examples at Overby Sheppard. Attendees from the City-Wide Micah Initiative took time to share their successes and challenges while enjoying Sally Bell box lunches.

For more information about the Micah Association, contact Program Director Qasarah Spencer at 783-7903 ext. 14.
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 $80 per 24 hrs. / Guided $100 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 FOR 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.

CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS
Tuesdays, 4:45 - 5:45 p.m.
David Vinson, 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: David Vinson at 783-7903 or hospitality@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.

Koinonia School of Race & Justice: Re-Imagining Public Education

Finding Grace in Race:

G R A C E

A public lecture series designed to encourage open and honest dialogue around issues of race and justice.

The lecture will be followed by facilitated conversation and group processing time among the audience. 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. For more information or to RSVP, please contact DeBorah Cannady at 804-783-7903, or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

Re-Imagining K-12 Public Education using a Panel Discussion

Feb. 27
Monday
7:30 pm

This lecture will feature a panel of experts addressing and envisioning some emerging possibilities in the landscape of K-12 public school education.

In the Spring these lectures are scheduled on the last Monday of the month, as follows:

Monday, February 27
Re-Imagining Public Education

Monday, March 27
Media Bias & Race

Monday, April 24
Justice System & Race
CENTERING IN CHRIST
THE BENEDICTINE PATH TO JOY

A Special 24-HOUR RETREAT
Friday, March 31 – Saturday, April 1, 2017

JANE TOMAINE, DMin, author and Episcopal priest, lives in Mountainside, NJ. She is a nationally known retreat leader and workshop leader on the Rule and spirituality at monasteries, parishes and retreat centers. Learn more about Jane and her work at: www.stbenedictstoolbox.org

Date & Time: 4 pm, Friday, March 31 — 4pm, Saturday, April 1, 2017
Facilitator: Reverend Jane Tomaine | Suggested Donation: $110

RETREAT LEADERSHIP CO-SPONSORED BY PRESENCE PLACE, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Register online: www.richmondhillva.org
or contact DeBorah Cannady at 804-783-7903, or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

2017 Summer Institute
The Evolving Enneagram
Monday, July 17, 4:00 p.m. through Friday, July 21, 2:00 p.m.

Registration is limited to 40 people.
Registration must be confirmed by June 15, 2017.
RUAH Alumni Association members must register by April 15, 2017 to qualify for reduced registration cost. A non-refundable payment of $200 at time of registration is required to consider registration confirmed. The balance must be paid before start of institute. Some scholarships may be available upon request. Register during a visit to Richmond Hill. Ask at reception desk or office. Register online: www.richmondhillva.org

At the heart of this 5-day retreat, participants will experience stillness, silence, and working from the “ground of our existence up” as we journey together. Symbols and movement will invoke an embodied foundation for reconnection with the infinite wealth of information of innate wholeness within each of us.

The Evolving Enneagram Institute will provide the foundational steps of the conscious journey towards fully embodying, embracing and empowering our lives — living deeply, and becoming fully alive.
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
Jim Bennett, Leader
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 candlelit chapel. The songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. The hope is this reality will gradually penetrate one’s whole being; thus the meditative singing becomes a way of listening to God. Our practice of Taize includes singing, prayer for Metropolitan Richmond, and a period of silence. Jim Bennett, a skilled musician, leads this time of worship with a variety of instruments.

SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE
DeBorah Cannady, Leader
1st Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and 3rd Mondays at 7:30 p.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.

GENERATIONAL HEALING SERVICE
5th Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Rev. Dr. Paula O. Parker, Leader
Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a service for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God’s healing into your family, including generations that have gone before, as well as generations that will come after you. Participants are encouraged to bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of their ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). However, careful preparation of your personal genogram will help you pray more specifically for your family members.
For those who might find it helpful, 2-hour preparation sessions will be facilitated by Rev. Parker on the following Tuesdays during 2017: Jan 17th, May 16th, July 25th and Oct 17th. For more information, call DeBorah Cannady at 783-7903.

Courses

Cleansing and Healing Streams

Reviving the Real You
7:30 pm on Thurs. March 2 – April 6, 2017
During the 2017 Lenten Season, Cleansing and Healing Streams is offering a 6-week course on “Reviving the Real You.” During this time we will continue our growth and development in: Our Walk in the Spirit; Renewing Our Commitment with God; The Importance of The Words We Speak; The Process of Sanctification; Entering The Cleansing Waters and ending with Our Continued Growth in Christ (While Helping Others). Come join us during this 6-week course of study and reflection and plan to leave renewed.

Facilitator: DeBorah Cannady, Coordinator of Healing Ministry
Co-Facilitators: Rev. Sylvia King and Donna Slaughter
Suggested donation: $30.00 (dinner and materials included)
To register, please contact DeBorah Cannady, at (804) 783-7903 or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

Introducing the Recovery Eucharist — a service devoted to healing and personal transformation found within 12-step spirituality and embodied in the Eucharist. A special invitation is extended to those recovering from any addiction and to those who desire to support people in recovery.
Starting on January 24, 2017, on 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in Chapel.
Signs of the season

What to keep, what to toss? What to take on? And what to let go?

That’s where my UPDATE article left off last month. And now it’s no longer Epiphany, yet not quite Lent. In my pre-Lenten spirit the question of the Resurrection is beginning to bud, like these shrubs shaking off their winter mantle all around me.

This is a crazy time, an unsettled time. Signs of change are appearing, not all of them welcome, some quite bewildering in fact. When distractions abound, it’s hard to stay focused on the real work at hand.

So then, what’s the real work at hand? One idea coming to me is this question: what does life transformed look like? Good question. And, an even better one — how might this transformation in my life be taking place?

My best friend loves to read, maybe as much as I do. The other night she shared a passage with me from Gail Godwin’s Father Melancholy’s Daughter. “You have to go on and find out what you are in the human drama, or body of God. The what beyond the who, so to speak…”

This profound concept was the musing of a priest preparing his Easter sermon in a work of fiction. But I believe this passage has relevance in our lives, right here, right now. It holds a key truth about transformation, about our own resurrections.

The resurrection was the Big Bang beginning of a huge transformative event. Echoes of this event are going on all around us today. As believers in our Lord’s resurrection, I think we are tasked to find out what we are supposed to do to help participate in the transformation — the coming of the Kingdom.

So, what might my “what” look like? Might it be a thing I am uniquely configured for, a task fitted specially for me? Is it a one-off event? Or, is it an on-going engagement?

This is all about purpose. Finding purpose happens by asking questions. Big questions, such as: What are we doing here? Why are we here? What is the work you or I have to do? Or, what is the unique task that we get to do?

Wrestling with these questions is an activity perfectly suited for this upcoming Lenten season. Here are a couple of suggestions to keep in mind as we grapple and grope for some answers: Keep the faith. Toss the doubt. Take on the challenge. Let go of the fear.

And with God’s blessing and a little sweat, here’s hoping we’ll see each other in transformation. After all, it is the season.

Richard Rumble
Communications Director
February 2017

Metro Richmond at Prayer

In February:

Pray for the Coming of God’s Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond.

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.

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www.richmondhillva.org

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