

UPDATE

For the spirit of the city

RICHMOND
HILL

2209 EAST GRACE STREET RICHMOND, VA 23223

NOVEMBER 2016

TENDING THE SPIRIT

Pray All Ways

If nothing else, this election season has been a call to prayer. In the midst of loud competing voices, I'm reminded again that there is only one voice that deserves my full attention. Prayer is how I listen and prayer is meant to be my response. It's at the heart of the Christian life and needed always.

There were early desert monks who took the Apostle Paul's admonition to pray without ceasing literally, adopted the rigorous practice of alternating praying for one another. While one slept or ate or did chores, the other would pray his prayers for him and vice versa. Is that what Paul had in mind? How else might it be possible to pray without ceasing?

Prayer is at the heart of the Rule of Benedict, a primary influence on daily life at Richmond Hill. Work and prayer done in equal measure until the line between them is blurred. As Benedictine author Esther De Waal points out, "Christ is to be found in the circumstances, the people, the things of daily life [and as we become aware of this] we shall lift our hearts to him and in this way our whole life will become prayer in action."

The practice of Lectio Divina, or sacred reading, affirmed in Benedict's rule, incorporates several approaches to prayer. In Lectio Divina one is quiet, reflective, imaginative, expressive, and creative — involved in several ways of relating to God. Without space here to elaborate in detail on the practice itself, I'd like to offer the elements of Lectio Divina as a framework for a life of on-going prayer.

SILENCIO Lectio Divina begins with silence and time for centering in God's presence. St. John of the Cross pointed out that silence is God's first language, one we need to learn ourselves. In our noisy world we have to seek out silence. To be in meaningful relationship with God we need to

become quiet so another voice can be heard.

Silence is valued at Richmond Hill. We've intentionally added it to our three times of prayer, though it has always been there between the words and every verse and line. It's the silence that makes our speaking understandable. Rest, breathe, pause, wait; all are necessary to hear God speak.

When do you find silence in your daily life? How could you make more room for it?

LECTIO Benedictine monks are expected to read the Bible daily. It happens regularly during communal prayers at Richmond Hill and on Wednesday mornings residents sit down together and practice lectio with the Hebrew text for the week.

Of course God speaks through the ordinary events of our lives as well. The invitation is to be open, attentive, awake and receptive at every turn, reading what life brings us; a dream at night, a casual comment made by a stranger, a

headline in the local newspaper, the sunset at the end of the day, a sudden inspiration. In what ways are you being attentive in each moment? How are you reading your surroundings, paying attention to what you see, hear, and notice throughout the day and night?

MEDITATIO The rule of Benedict invites monks to reflect creatively upon what is heard or read or seen. Each moment offers an opportunity for reflection. My spiritual director taught me years ago that there are no coincidences, only connections. Accepting that truth has changed the way I look at things. I am part of a larger picture that I must appreciate and engage with intentionally. What connections do you notice today? What thread can you see running through your experience as evidence of God's presence?

ORATIO Talking to God is what usually comes to mind when we think of prayer. And there is a place for that. It's saying grace before meals, getting down on our knees at bedtime, offering petitions or intercessions

*What would
it take for you
to pray without
ceasing?*

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TENDING THE SPIRIT

in worship. German mystic Meister Eckhart said that if the only prayer we utter is thank you, that would be enough. What are you thankful for today? What needs to be asked for? Is there something you noticed today that makes you want to shout out for joy?

CONTEMPLATIO Relationship is what prayer is all about, ours with God and God's with us. It's about our being present to the Presence. I know a friendship is solid when I don't have to say anything to enjoy being with that person. God desires a relationship like that with us. *Contemplatio* acknowledges that there comes a time when it isn't necessary to say any more, just being together is enough. Can you take a deep breath and acknowledge God's presence in this moment? There is no need to explain it or force it or even feel it. God is always here. Can you accept that, and that you are accepted right now just as you are?

INCARNATIO Incarnation is the distinguishing feature of our faith. God becomes one of us. It's already happened and it's happening still all around us. God comes to us and is revealed through us. The question becomes how will we embody the love of Christ in the world ourselves? To do that, no doubt, would be (is) an answer to prayer.

What Paul was getting at when he asked us to pray without ceasing must have had something to do with an incarnational understanding of prayer. Prayer understood and practiced as a walking, living, breathing relationship with God makes it possible. What would that look like for you? What's required for you to be open to God's love flowing in and through you to the extent that others would see you as an answer to prayer? What would it mean for you to *be* a prayer? What would it take for you to pray without ceasing?

Rev. Joel Blunk

Co-Pastoral Director

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REVIVE RICHMOND

A window to hope and thanksgiving

Any attempt to honor this season of Thanksgiving, when political and social rhetoric accost us at every turn, can easily remind us of our need for revival and our desperate search for hope. Thoughts of our desperate search for hope bring to mind an illustration I used in a recent sermon. It was one of the many lessons I was taught as a child and only came to appreciate later in life. A lesson, I believe, that can help any of us get in touch with the hope within. That lesson being: when you find yourself getting caught up in how crazy and unfair life can be, it is a good idea to stop and acknowledge any goodness around you.

Often, when I or one of my siblings got into a rant about life's troubles or unfairness, my mother would give us a few sheets of writing paper and a pencil and instruct us to "count your blessings." It required writing out a list of all the things for which we were thankful. Usually, it did not take long for the frustration, anger or ranting to subside.

The lesson was never to say that our perceptions were invalid, or that it was wrong to feel frustrated, upset, sad or even angry. Rather, such occasions were good times to remind ourselves of how gracious God is and how much goodness surrounds us if we just let ourselves see it. They were also occasions to remind us not to get stuck in our emotions. Sometimes it will take me a few moments to think of the many things for which I could feel thankful. Writing them down was especially helpful. Today we call that journaling. Do you know what happens when you do that?

When you start to create the list, it's like the shade that has covered the window to your soul is raised and light comes in. The more you think of the ways in which you are blessed, the more your sense of frustration and resentment dissipates. Before long you feel like you are the most blessed creature alive. A sense of hope floods back into your life. You feel the goodness of God's presence once again.

In our Christian tradition, we identify with this revival of souls as we read the numerous accounts in the psalms of people who grieved (lamented) life's ills while recounting God's goodness in their lives. The psalmists tell us that the faithful God of grace and mercy heard their cry for help and hope; and they responded with songs of praise and Thanksgiving. In all this, I would say Thanksgiving is not just a good day to give thanks, but also a window to hope and a good place to start our journey back to revival, hope and healing.

Rev. Janie M. Walker
Co-Pastoral Director

Pray for Persons in Financial Need in Metropolitan Richmond.

November 2016

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

November 6, 2016. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For the unemployed and underemployed, for suitable work, living wages, and fair benefits for all workers in this metropolitan city; and for sufficient employment to make healthy family life possible.

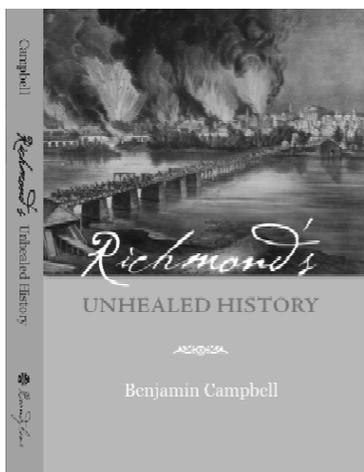
November 13, 2016. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For the homeless and the hungry, for the provision of safe, affordable housing and low cost nutritious food, for the personal safety, dignity, and well being of those who are unable to work.

November 20, 2016. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy marriages; for constructive, safe, and caring households for the bringing up and nurturing of children and caring for the elderly.

November 27, 2016. We pray for persons in financial need in Metropolitan Richmond: For the inclusion of all, regardless of race, age, or jurisdiction of residence, in the economic health of Metropolitan Richmond; for effective, affordable, regional public transportation.

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History

by Benjamin Campbell

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Off to a great start

The Armstrong Leadership Program has started the 2016 -17 school year on a positive note. Adding to the 19 returning students are 28 excited and promising new recruits. We started this year with a total of 47 committed leaders and are excited about the potential of this group to make a difference in the school and within the community. The list of core community partners remains the same as last year: Cadence Theater (Stagewrite), Richmond Peace Education Center, UVA College Corps, University of Richmond and YHELLI. Additionally, we have strengthened our relationships with RRHA and are continuing to develop collaborative opportunities with St. Christopher's School and the Armstrong Freshman Academy.

In September, several ALP students participated in the weekend RPEC Conflict Resolution Training, earning service hours and certification. The opening session was the first week in October beginning with installation of the officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Public Relations and Peace Maker. Later that evening, we visited St. Christopher's school for a leadership lecture hosted by the school. The students experienced a riveting discussion by five of the Syracuse 8. These men shared their experiences and discussed their book, *Leveling the Playing Field*. The book tells the story of members of the 1969-70 Syracuse University football team, who petitioned for racial equality on their team. The petition had four demands: access to the same academic tutoring made available to their white teammates; better medical care for all team members; starting assignments based on merit rather than race; and a discernible effort to racially integrate the coaching staff and much, much more!

So far, we have been on the road to the University of Virginia for the Fall Fling (African American Orientation Day) in Charlottesville, Virginia, as well as a beautifully planned trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture with students from the Freshman Academy. Experiencing the museum was a tremendous opportunity for our students. We even had the chance to tour the campus of Howard University and enjoyed dinner and games at Meridian Park.

Lastly, our Fall Retreat is scheduled for November 18th - 20th in Jamestown, Virginia with the continuation of the HERO's Journey as the theme. We continue to recruit volunteers and mentors for the 2016 -2017 school year. If you are interested in participating, please contact Ms. Yvette at (804) 314-2622.

— Yvette Rajput, Director, and Marvin Roane, Assistant Director

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



ALP visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture in D.C. with students from the Freshman Academy.

Richmond Hill Studies in

Retreats Classes Groups Schools Retreats Classes

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.

David Vinson, 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: 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: Implicit Cultural Bias & Race

Finding Grace in Race:



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

**Implicit
Cultural Bias
and Race**
*with Dr. Alison
Gise-Johnson*

Nov.28
Monday
7:30 pm

This lecture explores the significant role of implicit cultural bias in racial matters. **About the lecturer:** Dr. Alison Gise-Johnson is the Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program in the School of Theology at Virginia Union.

This Fall these lectures were scheduled on the last Monday of the month, as follows:

Monday, September 26
Race & Richmond's History

Monday, October 24
Theology of Race

Monday, November 28
Race & Cultural Bias

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

COMING UP THIS DECEMBER

*Waiting for the one
who has
already
come...*

DECEMBER 2-4, 2016



Waiting isn't easy, but each year at Advent we're reminded again to do just that. Jewish author, Simone Weil, said, "Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life." The anticipation of Jesus' birth and the promise of his return testify to that. So why is it so hard for us to wait? As people of faith, how are we to do it? What, exactly, are we waiting for and why? Join Richmond Hill's new co-pastoral director, Rev. Joel Blunk, for an exploration of these questions and more. Time together will provide focus for the season through an in-depth exploration of the theme, including:

- Praying the hours with the Richmond Hill community
- Connecting with the examples of Mary, Elizabeth, and Zechariah
 - An experience of solitude and community
- A look at Stability, Community, and Conversion in relation(ship) to waiting
 - An opportunity to get to know Joel through sermon, story, and song

Suggested donation: \$180 per person

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

WORSHIP SERVICES

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 Taizé 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.

RETREATS



Saturday, January 17 **9 am – 4 pm, in the Art Space**

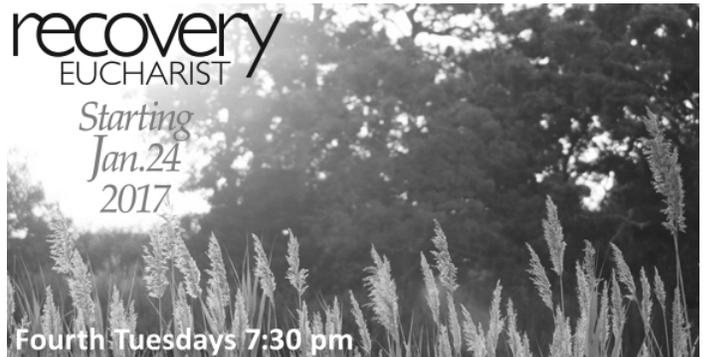
Enjoy a relaxing, refreshing, recharging day in the quiet and beauty of the Richmond Hill Art Space. There is time at the end of the day for sharing and reflection on the meaningful creative/spiritual process we experienced.

You can bring your own project and materials. Explore paper and found objects for collage, watercolors, pencil and markers. Consider making something to enhance your prayer time or make a gift for someone like a prayer card, landscape, bookmark, or an icon to reflect a person, concept, or scripture.

Facilitator: Brenda Giannini works to open us to the sacred dimensions of our lives through the gifts of the visual arts. In this program, we look at various art forms throughout the year and create our own works of art in the prayerful quiet of Richmond Hill.

Suggested donation: \$30.00 (includes lunch)

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.

Generational healing prayer at Richmond Hill

Generational healing prayer is prayer for the healing of brokenness in families and family relationships. It is also prayer to bless, strengthen, and multiply the talent, skills, and achievements in families. Generational healing prayer loosens the grip of negative traits that are transmitted from generation to generation and in doing so creates the opportunity for special gifts, talents, and abilities to strengthen and grow.

Many world cultures, such as Native American and African, believe ancestral influences can dramatically affect living individuals. The Sankofa, the Adrinka symbol of the Akan people of Ghana West Africa, is a bird whose body is heading in one direction, but whose head is turned in the opposite direction. It means “we cannot go forward without first looking back to our past.” The Seventh Generation Principle of the Iroquois is to consider in every deliberation the impact on the seventh generation.

In scripture, the second commandment identifies and supports the transmission of blessings and trauma through the generations. “You shall not bow down to them (idols) or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.” (Exodus 20: 5-7)

In anticipation of the Israelites and us not being able to keep the second commandment, and all the rest, God sent God’s son to save and heal us. Jesus is our timeless healer and deliverer. He can send his healing presence into all the generations of trauma in our family history in order for our eyes to be opened, our hearts healed, and our families set free to flourish in the gifts and blessings he has for us.

Jesus can make sense of the bits and pieces of the family legacy we inherited. If we bring his healing light to our family tree we create that fertile soil for present and future generations to flourish. Who knows what blessings are waiting for us and for them?

Rev. Dr. Paula Owens Parker

Paula Owens Parker is an adjunct assistant professor of Spiritual Formation, Union Presbyterian Seminary and Senior Program Developer of Roots Matter LLC. www.rootsmatterllc.com

To be seen, and heard

There are many different ministries that serve this broken world we call home. And lately, I’ve been thinking about one in particular: the ministry of presence.

When my youngest daughter entered seventh grade, she had a new teacher for religion, a class that her older sister adored. The original teacher passed away unexpectedly during the first week of school, hence the arrival of the new teacher. “How do you like her?” I asked at dinner one night. “Well, I like her a lot,” said Elizabeth. “But she says the same thing every day at the end of class: ‘Girls, your presence is gift to me.’ That is so weird!”

“Actually, that’s wonderful,” I replied. “Importance and humor.” Not bad for a teacher right out of seminary.

That young teacher is now the head of the religious studies department. She modeled the principle of presence to her students. Presence is witness, and witness is powerful: I see you. I hear you. I witness you.

What happens to us when we are seen? And heard? And what happens to us when we are not?

Presence can be a powerful, affirming ministry. There are both aspects of giving and receiving going on in this dynamic. Seeing and listening are both examples of the gift of engagement.

Early in Matthew’s gospel, just as Jesus is embarking on His journey of public ministry, the writer tells of God’s reaction to the scene by the river Jordan. The heavens opened, the dove descended, the Voice was heard to say, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Wow. What affirmation! He hadn’t done anything yet, but what a powerful way to start your day!

This fall, we began working with our fourth Vocare class here at Richmond Hill. Students from many walks of life are seeking out what comes next in their particular journey. They’re being equipped with six tools for this task, but the main one is small group discussion.

In the small group circle, souls emerge in answer to questions asked. We witness one another in ways very different from the polite, perfunctory, casual encounters of the normal day to day.

We are looking for signs of the presence of God’s Holy Spirit, pointing to the emerging of the authentic in the life before us.

Look, listen, behold. And be held in the mysterious wonder of the gift of presence.

*Richard Rumble
Communications Director*



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November 2016



Metro Richmond at Prayer

In November:

Pray for Persons in Financial Need 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 addic-
tion, 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 metropol-
itan 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 met-
ropolitan 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 metropol-
itan 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 busi-
nesses. 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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