Like a House Built on the Rock

Transition and change are nothing new. We face them every day in some way or another in our individual lives and corporately. They are inevitable. And so it goes at Richmond Hill. We are fully in a time of transition and change at Richmond Hill. As I reflect on Richmond Hill’s history, it seems we have consistently dealt with transition and change. What has been constant over the past 27 years are Richmond Hill’s mission and core values. And that mission and those core values will be our solid ground as we move forward now.

Over the years, especially while in leadership, I’ve experienced the residential community as the heart of the ministry of Richmond Hill. The residential community has made an extraordinary commitment to seek healing in RVA. What could hold this community together? In large part, it’s the Rule of Richmond Hill (which you will find on the website and which is worth studying and considering). It’s like a rock. It’s like a solid foundation. It’s immovable and prophetic. It is what makes Richmond Hill so strong, but also flexible and durable.

Hundreds of folks have been a part of the residential community over the years, each flowing in and out of the life of the community. Until this month, only two had been a part of the residential community for over 25 years — Ben and Annie — and now, like hundreds before them, they are in a new season in a new place (and we miss them). Yet the challenges are the same as always — making space for others to help with the healing, to live out the ministry of Richmond Hill. And, we wait.

The transition of pastoral leadership at Richmond Hill has been in process for almost two years. Ben became the Senior Pastor. Janie Walker and Andrew Terry became Co-Pastors — modeling shared leadership — until Andrew’s recent call to new ministry.

Now Janie will lead us while we seek new leadership. I am very grateful for Janie’s leadership and spirit. I am very grateful for each person in the residential community, for their commitment, for their discipline, and for their dedication.

Richmond Hill has been an important place in my life for over 25 years. It has long been my spiritual home. Here, I am encouraged to search and question. The world presses us to accept and conform. For me and many others, Richmond Hill has been a place of refreshment, encouragement, learning, healing, and challenge.

Over the past years, it seems that my primary theological inquiry has revolved around what it means to follow Jesus of Nazareth. What does it look like? What does it feel like? What does it mean to be Christian? What was important to Jesus — the teacher, healer, and prophet — when he lived? In an increasingly complicated and disintegrated world, what does Jesus teach us about living now? What does Jesus want today in RVA?

At Richmond Hill, I believe I’ve seen what it looks like to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I believe I’ve seen what it looks like to love my neighbor as myself. I have had many opportunities to consider the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

All these questions are encouraged by my spirit community at Richmond Hill. They accept my questions. They accept my doubts. They accept me where I am. I feel a mighty love here.

The business of living life well is not simple or easy, and we need help. We need places like Richmond Hill (and the folks who live there) to teach us, walk with us, and work with us. And, of course, RVA needs a deep dose of healing.

So, this time of transition and change at Richmond Hill is also a time of challenge and opportunity. The

We can be no less than a cloud of witnesses in a world of hurt, in a still-wounded City in dire need of healing.
**TENDING THE SPIRIT**

Simple truth is that we need you to be a part of Richmond Hill now more than ever. We need your prayers, spirit, encouragement, leadership, commitment, and resources. You know like I do that Richmond Hill is holy space. There is a sweetness and peacefulness here that is unlike anywhere I’ve been.

I am certain God wants Richmond Hill to thrive. How might that happen? God mostly works through us. We are God’s hands and feet on the Earth. We are God’s hands and feet at Richmond Hill. The upshot is that Richmond Hill will thrive through us and only through us.

Now, in this time of transition, new space has opened at Richmond Hill for me and for you. I invite you to sit with God and pray and consider how you might connect with Richmond Hill or deepen your connection with us. In my own life, I need what Richmond Hill offers, and I believe I can contribute to Richmond Hill’s mission and vibrancy. You can too.

If you are new to Richmond Hill, a good first step is to join us on any Monday at 5:30 p.m. for our community worship service (with Holy Communion), then to stay for dinner and conversation. Or come on any Tuesday for prayers at Noon, then stay for lunch (but please call in advance to let us know you’re coming on a Tuesday). Please also check our website for retreat, school, and other offerings.

For all those who sustain this ministry, thank you! For those who wish to be a part (or a deeper part) of this ministry, come! With God’s help, we can be no less than a cloud of witnesses in a world of hurt, in a still-wounded City in dire need of healing. God made us to be in community and, in fact, to be the Beloved Community. Let us continue to do so here at Richmond Hill!

*Jay Kepley, Transitional Team Member*

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**REVIVE RICHMOND**

**Specificity in Prayer**

After thumbing through a Metro Richmond At Prayer booklet, a first-time visitor standing in the lobby here at Richmond Hill asked in a tone of amazement, “Do you have people all over Richmond praying for these things?” The question gave me an opportunity to talk about how over 200 churches throughout metropolitan Richmond have covenanted to incorporate a calendar of prayers into their Sunday morning worship services since March of 2006. It also gave me an opportunity to think about the Apostle Paul’s prayer for the church at Ephesus that showed up in our epistle reading this week (Ephesians 3:14-21). Most of all, it reminded me of the power of prayer in our lives. Could this be why I feel so confident of an impending renewal (revival) here in Metro Richmond?

Most of the prayers we pray here at Richmond Hill, as well as those we encourage others to partner with us to pray, incorporate the empowering practice of naming specific things for which to pray. Specificity in prayer does create opportunity for others to agree with us in prayer; it creates opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to pray in faith; it creates joy and encouragement in the hearts of those being prayed for; and it ultimately creates opportunity for acknowledgement of God’s goodness in our lives as we see evidence of answered prayers.

In this Ephesians passage, Paul was explicit in stating what things he was praying for on behalf of the church at Ephesus. Considering his prayers for strength, a Christ-filled heart, the power to comprehend and know the love of God, what a great blessing it must have been for the Ephesians, as they read his letter, to know that somebody somewhere was praying this prayer for them. What difference it must make to you, as you read this newsletter, to know that the community at Richmond Hill and more than 200 congregations throughout metropolitan Richmond are praying with specificity for each jurisdiction, its governing bodies, known needs and concerns, organizations and institutions, individuals and groups.

The doxology in this Ephesians passage sums up the intent of the entire prayer. It also sums up the faith of those who dare to pray with us. This doxology and our faith says that God is able to go beyond what we expect; that there is an inexhaustible fullness of grace and mercy in God. For God is well able to “accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.”

May your heart be encouraged so much so that you would join us in prayer and watch to see when “newness of life” comes to your particular location.

*The Rev. Janie M. Walker, Interim Pastoral Director*
Pray for the Workplaces and Businesses of Metropolitan Richmond.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil 2:12-13)

August 2, 2015. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For safe, respectful work environments, healthy work ethics and attitudes, and sufficient salary and benefits for all workers. For owners and managers: for servant leadership, civic responsibility and ethical decision-making.

August 9, 2015. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For owners and managers: for servant leadership, civic responsibility and ethical decision-making.

August 16, 2015. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For financial institutions, healthy and constructive investment policies, and effective development efforts to benefit the entire community.

August 23, 2015. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For economic development in depressed portions of the city, for the establishment of businesses that will create new employment opportunities.

August 30, 2015. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For full employment opportunities for our young people and heads of families, for the long-term unemployed, and for the under-employed.

Available now from the Richmond Hill Bookstore

**Richmond’s Unhealed History**

*by Benjamin Campbell*

$15.95 *plus tax* at Richmond Hill

or

$18.50 *postpaid, tax included,* by mail from Richmond Hill.

Your order from the Richmond Hill Bookstore supports Richmond Hill.

Community Trustbuilding Fellowship 2015-2016

*Building trust in the heart of community*

**Initiatives of Change / Hope in the Cities** is now enrolling participants in a unique program designed to increase the capacity of community leaders to overcome divisions of race, culture, economics and politics. They seek to create a network of skilled facilitators, capable teambuilders and credible role models. This residential training program in community trustbuilding will be offered at Richmond Hill and consists of five 48-hr. weekend retreats. The first weekend is scheduled for October 16-18, 2015.

Please check our website for the latest information on street accessibility during the Race.

**UCI Bike Race | Sept. 19-27**

The whole world will be watching as the best cyclists in the world compete for fame and glory right here in our fair city. Richmond Hill will be open, but it will be challenging to access us during the race. We hope to have good information on the street access points around Richmond Hill by mid-August.

Please check our web site after August 12 for the latest information on street accessibility during the Race.

**Arrivals and departures**

A warm welcome to the Urban Service Corps Class of 2015-16! Heather Peterson of Grace & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and Brian Lamm of Movement Church will be moving into Richmond Hill this month and beginning their year of engagement in urban ministry. Tony Martin and Linda Anderson plan to continue in the Urban Service Corps for another year, working in hospitality and facilities management.

We say goodbye to Erna Seaberry, who is remaining in Richmond and working as a Customer Service Rep at General Dynamics. And we bid a farewell blessing on Ebony Walden, who also will be near by as she tackles community engagement work with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation).

We are excited to welcome the arrival of these new members of the community, and deeply grateful for the kind and gracious service of those departing.

More information and applications available at www.us.iofc.org/ctf
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.

ENROLL NOW!
Monet had his water lilies, Van Gogh had his Irises, and you could have the garden at Richmond Hill for your inspiration. Come join us for an OPEN STUDIO in our lush, private garden complete with fish, fowl, and quiet paths for your exciting en plein air experience. Bring your own paints or supplies to set up in our garden or experiment with our pencils, pens, markers, chalks, and other materials.

This retreat is all about having some time for yourself, having fun with art and others while being in a place of beauty, prayer and hospitality.

We will look closely at the following questions for our own personal answers: What inspires us? Where does Creativity come from? How do we foster and nourish our creativity? What role does our faith and our spirituality play in our art? Join us and enjoy the quiet, inspiring garden, and the spirit of Richmond Hill.

To register, please contact DeBorah Cannady, Guestmaster at Richmond Hill, by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org or at (804) 783-7903.
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 August 21.*

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

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The Art of Grief:

Aug. 9, Sunday, 9 am – 4 pm

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.

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

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

Suggested donation: $20.00 (includes lunch)

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The School of Pastoral Care and Counseling is now accepting applications for the 2016 Class which begins in September 2015 and ends June 2016.

Pastoral Care and Counseling is a one-year program that focuses on enhancing one’s skills in ministering to those who are experiencing physical, emotional, and spiritual difficulties. It is designed to help persons improve the quality of their own self-reflection through journaling, prayer, meditation, and Bible reflection.

This course is also offered on-line as Directed Study.

*To inquire or apply, please contact the Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris, Director of Holistic Pastoral Care and Counseling Services at (804) 783-7903 ext. 28 or by email at: aharris@richmondhillva.org*
Heaven’s music

The street sign by the hospital reads, “quiet zone.” Patients and medical personal welcome a respite from unnecessary noise. The church is also a quiet zone. Worshipers enter with an assortment of problems: worry, fear, discouragement, sorrow and other maladies of the spirit. The Great Physician extends His comfort and healing touch to restore troubled lives. We trust in His promise to restore troubled lives. We trust His promise. “In rest you shall be saved. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” (Isaiah 30:15).

There are days we may have trouble seeing through fog. The haze of struggle and disappointment obstruct our view of heaven. It is in times like these that we need faith. This is where we must trust that there a sun behind the clouds; that there is a God who cares and that this same God is beside us even when we cannot see or feel His presence. Let us proclaim our faith as Paul did: “For now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face. Now I know in part but then I shall know just as also I am known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Have you ever competed or watched a gunnysack race? It is quiet challenging to hop toward the goal without getting one foot wrapped around each other and landing face down in the dirt. Then when inevitable happens and you find yourself in the ground bound and tied by a gunny sac. Three-legged racing helps overcome our limitations. When we fall we rise up together. Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor. If they fall one will lift up his companion. “But woe to him who is alone when he or she falls they have no one to help up.” (Ecclesiastics 4:9-10).

Harmony within comes when follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must be afraid to venture on our own as a child fears to leave its mother’s side. We must doubt our own wisdom and rely on God’s wisdom. This will teach us humility. Humility is not the belittling of self. It is remembering God. Let us not expect to live in a world where all is harmony. We must work to maintain our own hearts pace in adverse circumstances. Harmony is always when we strain our ears to reach Heaven’s Music. Let us always doubt our power or wisdom to put things right by asking God to all as we leave it to Him and go our way living and loving. Since only God’s Wisdom can decide anything, or solve any problem.

All is well when we rely on You.

Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris
Pastoral Counselor
**Reflection on the Rule**

**CONVERSION OF LIFE (CONVERSATIO) —**

Living one’s life as a conversation with God, in a commitment to personal spiritual disciplines.

My entire year here has been a conversation with God that has focused on two major questions; what now and what is next. The tension is one we all face between the present and the future. I’ve had to be in prayer, reflection and conversation with this community and my broader community of friends and family to navigate this unique time in my life. All of these things have allowed God to speak and for me to listen and respond.

The question of “what now?” was answered by doing what was in front of me. Every day I was invited to be present to my work on Transit, my relationships with residents and guests and to be present both in body and mind at prayers, meetings and times of formation. I’ve continued to ask myself “How is this particular scripture that we are reading speaking to me? What in the message at our service does God have for me? Whom can I bless, whether it’s a guest, resident or member of the larger community with my presence, perspective and hospitality?” I’ve also tried to be faithful to the needs that arise in the present, of making more coffee, an impromptu meeting or task, a spontaneous conversation that erupts at the dinner table. I’ve been present to the laughter in the kitchen and chapter room and made sure to enjoy the garden and walk the labyrinth as well. Mostly, it has been maintaining my commitment to do what is mine to do, presentations for Transit, washing dishes, cleaning dorms and tidying the Chapel. These things have both provided a sense of solidity, purpose and wonder.

The answer to “what’s next?” was aided by my time in Vocare. I learned how to discern what I might do in the future by listening to the lessons of the past and paying attention to what brings me energy in the present. Both inquiry, stepping into the deep questions and action, taking steps forward to test and explore, have provided great clarity. My work as a resident and with Rapid Transit in addition to lectures, trainings and conversations at Richmond Hill and with friends have helped me to do the work of self-discovery that has shaped what I plan to do next. I’ll stay in Church Hill, work in community development, write, pursue life coaching and hopefully participate in RUAH.

This has been a purifying time, of hard work and commitment, of joy and laughter, of good food and good fellowship. God spoke to me through all of these things; about who I am, who He is and what he has called me to do. He has come to me “disguised as my life” and I am glad to receive the gifts of the present and the hope for the future that Richmond Hill has provided.

*Ebony Walden*

*Urban Service Corps*

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**In Direction**

**Reflections of a resident**

Three months ago Ben and I were married. After the wedding we went to a beautiful and remote part of Canada. In the quietness of the Canadian woods, we celebrated a marriage and prepared for a life together that would be radically different. We came home from our honeymoon and supervised the packing of my household furnishings. We followed the movers to Richmond. I was hit feelings of delight and loss all at once, and those were the feelings that took turns in those last days of summer and first days at Richmond Hill: delight in sharing life with Ben and loss in leaving a familiar place for uncharted territory.

My guides in this uncharted territory have been my children. To them Richmond Hill is an adventure, and they have helped me see the adventure in it. They have a favorite spot in the garden where they can see the James River, the train tracks and highways, all at once — a city pulsing with energy that matches their own. I stand in that spot with them, and I can see the majesty of a moment, because I’ve been given the grace and time to see it through their eyes. John, age 5, took his colored chalk out into the garden and drew Richmond Hill. With sweeping and vivid colors, he represented in grand scale his delight in this special place. We delighted in a garden walk decorated with joy and exuberance.

There is another special walkway in the garden that was discovered this month. Hard grey pieces of stone were uncovered, one by one, building the discovery of a lovely garden path. Other treasures have been found in the garden — an arrowhead, an old crucifix and gigantic rocks uncovered by the children. Delighted by the buried treasure, we discover the old as though it were new, and we wonder. I wonder, “Whose arrowhead?” I wonder if the crucifix fell off of a nun working in the garden. With delight in sharing life with Ben and loss in leaving a familiar place for uncharted territory.

I feel a kinship with the Indian and with the women who prayed as they watched a city grow tall around their walls. Their prayer made this space live, and we wonder. I wonder, “Whose arrowhead?” I wonder if the crucifix fell off of a nun working in the garden. I wonder, and I feel a kinship with the Indian and with the women who prayed as they watched a city grow tall around their walls. Their prayer made this space live, and I believe our prayers, yours and mine, keep it as a living space now.

Hidden pathways and buried treasure are a part of life here. I have left a path in Fredericksburg that was familiar and well trodden, and I’ve come to Richmond to uncover a walk with Ben, stone by stone. As a community, we are uncovering a way of life. Many of us are drawn to this place — to visit, to work, to volunteer or to live — because of the path to be uncovered within. That uncovering happens slowly and deliberately in a beautiful and special place and in blossoming friendship that I treasure.

*Annie Campbell*

*Resident*

This article first appeared in the December 1989 newsletter. Annie shared it again while leading her last Evening Prayer service with us on July 23, 2015. Blessings to all in the midst of beginning new adventures!
**August 2015**

**Metro Richmond at Prayer**

*In August:*

Pray for the Workplaces and Businesses of Metropolitan Richmond.

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**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.

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.

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**Help with the healing**

Show your support with a Metro Richmond at Prayer bumper sticker

Order online: www.metrorichmondatprayer.org

or call (804)783-7903.