Seamless Connections

"Of course, there is no question that things are changing," was my response for maybe the third time in one evening.

We cannot know for sure what God has in store for Richmond Hill in the months and years to come. Nor can we know for sure how any one of us might be called to live out a particular role in God’s plan for Richmond Hill. What we do know is that effective change requires bringing intentionality to the process. I was reminded of this a couple of weeks ago as I walked the Jerusalem Mile on the west end of the property here.

I stopped for a pause on the journey, looked up and was struck by the stark difference in the architecture of the upper level of the old Adams-Taylor house and the West Room — built in 1811 and 2003 respectively. Though a stark difference in the architecture, the connection of the two appeared seamless. The view reminded me of the many changes Richmond Hill has gone through — particularly the major renovation that spanned the years of 2001-2004. The view also reminded me of the many phases of work that was done, the intentionality of the planning that went into advancing the changes, and the joy we all now share in the beauty and use of this present facility.

Although our transition team has laid out a plan for moving us through the upcoming months, we understand that life transitions are a recurring part of our human experience. Each of us is interested in connecting the old to the new in a somewhat seamless manner. We are all familiar with the stress, excitement, anxiety, and hope that transition can bring. And, we are not exempt from the grieving, the rejoicing, the letting go as well as the receiving of something new. This liminal period, between the “what is” and “what is to come,” is not one to be judged. Rather, it is one to be acknowledged. To find the direction and meaning we so earnestly desire, we need to find our way through it and, ideally, find God in every step of the way.

Because we know that we will be going through some expected changes in the months to come, we have decided that for this season we will focus our attention on sustainability and continuity. In an attempt to engage you, our broader community, in the process, over the next few months, we will share spotlights of our thoughts, emotions and spiritual awareness as we proceed and adjust to the changes in our circumstances and life here at Richmond Hill.

As we share our reflections, we anticipate that you will read of our honest and vulnerable expressions of our experiences of this transition. My hope is that our reflections will not only inform you of where things stand, but also inform your prayers for us as we attempt to cling ever so tightly to God through all the changes ahead.

For now, as we celebrate the contributions Ben & Annie Campbell have made in the establishment and life of Richmond Hill, and in our metropolitan city, we invite you to join us as we further that celebration to an act of blessing. May they have many years of joy and good health in their new home. May they forever be surrounded with friends and
family with whom to laugh and grow. May the works of their hands continue with God’s grace and power. May the blessing they have been to others be multiplied to them. And, as we seek to establish a seamless connection with “what is,” let us be intentional about doing no less for ourselves. We celebrate the faithful and committed supporters and volunteers who have joined with us near and far in this time of transition. We celebrate the gifts they are and the gifts they bring.

As you contemplate the transition here at Richmond Hill, be intentional about joining us in blessing ourselves. Think about what hope you have for us, what help you suppose we might need, how our needs might be met, and how your own prayers will contribute to the seamless appearance of connecting the old and the new.

Join us in this prayer and blessing: May we remain ever faithful to our call and commitment to the healing of metropolitan Richmond. May the building blocks of prayer, spiritual guidance, racial reconciliation and hospitality ever remain the building blocks that will keep us open to God’s Spirit among us. May each phase of this transition be the block upon which the next is built; may it be seamless and all together block upon which the next is built; each phase of this transition be the open to God’s Spirit among us. May the blessing they have power. May the works of their hands grow. May the works of their hands bring.

The Rev. Janie Walker, Interim Pastoral Director

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Divine conspiracy

Sometimes revival is recognized best in an internal look, as expressed in the following article:

What great fun and fellowship was had at the most recent RUH School of Spiritual Guidance graduation (RUH XII). I am told that there was a deep sense of God’s presence. A common thread linking the end-of-school reflections of many graduates were descriptions of growth and spiritual transformation. Though there are commonalities, the experience for each RUH participant is a unique and cherished journey. The unfolding of each person’s transformation occurs at the particular intersection of the infinite creativity of God and the individual context of one’s life. Indeed, “The wind blows where it wills. You hear its sound, but do not know where it is coming from and where it is going. Thus is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” The radiant ebullience among graduates give witness to the transforming experiences of which they speak, even if the process is not fully articulated.

Those outside of this space might wonder if what I describe is merely a transitory “spiritual high.” What about the ongoing, intentional commitment to allow every thread in the fabric of ones specific social context (family, work, play, church, shopping, driving, etc) to be transformed? That is, if we take a snapshot at graduation and another one 10 years later, are RUH graduates more Christ like? Are they on their way to becoming the kind of people who easily and naturally do the things that Jesus did? If we knew where these graduates might be in ten years we would have a better sense as to whether the RUH schools make any difference in the healing of Metropolitan Richmond.

Fortunately, I am able to shed some light on this question. Over the last 22 years we have had 12 RUH schools and 255 graduates. In June of this year we celebrated our first RUH alumni gathering. Over 80 people were able to attend and the theme of spiritual transformation continued to resonate in the many stories shared that night. In the hallways and garden, and over dinner, I heard people share stories reflecting a steady deepening in their discipleship to Jesus Christ. It seems that many Ruah graduates are indeed profoundly involved in what Dallas Willard, one of my favorite authors, refers to as “The Divine Conspiracy.” The Divine Conspiracy refers to the ongoing triumph of Gods good over the forces of evil. It might be hard to see or believe if you are not looking for it. But of course that is the nature of a conspiracy.

Ruah alumni are participants, born of an ever-deepening apprenticeship to Jesus Christ, in the revival and healing of Metropolitan Richmond.

Sandy Gramling
Coordinator of Grief Ministry
Lead Organizer RUH Alumni Association
**Metro Richmond at Prayer**

### Pray for Governments and Governing Bodies of Metropolitan Richmond.

*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

(Micah 6:8)

**July 5, 2015.** We pray for governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Mayor and City Council of Richmond, the City Manager, and all city employees.

**July 12, 2015.** We pray for the governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Boards of Supervisors, Councils, Administrators, and employees of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, Powhatan, Ashland, Petersburg, and Hopewell.

**July 19, 2015.** We pray for governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Supervisors of Chesterfield County, the County Administrator, and all county employees.

**July 26, 2015.** We pray for governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Supervisors of Henrico County, the County Administrator, and all county employees; and for the Supervisors of Hanover County, the County Administrator, and all county employees.

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**Community News**

### Armstrong Leadership Program continues strong

We would like to send a huge heart felt *Thank You!* to all the mentors, sponsors and volunteers who gave of their time, energy and love to the students of Armstrong Leadership Program. Due to your continual support, the program was a huge success this year with over 50 participants! Five of our ALP students were listed in the ranks of the TOP ten seniors.

Some of the colleges our students will be attending this fall: James Madison University, Virginia State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Union University, Richard Bland College, Old Dominion University, Reynolds College, and Lake Forest College.

If you are interested in mentoring or volunteering this fall, please contact Yvette Davis Rajput, Director at work: 804-783-7903 ext.13, or cell 804-314-2622 or: yrajput@richmondhillva.org

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**Available Now from the Richmond Hill Bookstore**

### Richmond’s Unhealed History

*by Benjamin Campbell*

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

**$15.95 plus tax** at Richmond Hill or

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

Order by telephone (783-7903) or on the web richmondhillva.org

Your order from the Richmond Hill Bookstore supports Richmond Hill.

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### Armstrong Leadership Program invites Churches, Temples, Mosques, Sororities, Fraternities, Business/Social Organizations and Alumni Associations to help out…

**College Showers Need Hosts**

The Armstrong Leadership Program is inviting Richmond organizations to help high-achieving seniors at Armstrong High School who have been accepted to four year colleges by hosting a College Shower for a student. At this event, the organization will work towards providing some items the student will need to furnish his/her dorm room. For the participating students, this is an important piece in making the dream of attending college a reality.

If your ministry, congregation or organization has interest in hosting a shower, please contact Yvette Davis Rajput, Director, by **July 31, 2015** at work: 804-783-7903 ext.13, or cell 804-314-2622 or: yrajput@richmondhillva.org
**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.

**Upcoming Facilitated Retreats:** Sat. - Sun. Oct. 25-26
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

**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.
Helen Eano, Facilitator
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 – 1:30 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.

**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.
Now Enrolling: New Schools and Programs

Apply now for Sept. 2015

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 1.

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

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)

Holistic Pastoral Counseling Services (HPCS)

Cordially invites all to celebrate

Pastoral Care and Counseling Program

The celebratory event will take place:

September 5, 2015, 2 pm - 5 pm

Cedar Street Baptist Church of God
The Benjamin W. Robertson Memorial Center
3201 Cedar Street, Richmond, VA 23223

Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Leonard N. Smith

“25 years in God’s service to and with His people”

Now enrolling 2016 Class of Pastoral Care & Counseling

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
There are times when I feel alone even in the midst of a crowd of people. They are there but yet in some way I don’t feel like I am a part with them. This happens when I feel a need to step back and take a look at myself and ask a few questions. The Psalmist put it this way: “Keep my soul and deliver me let me not be ashamed for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me for I trust You.” (Psalm 25:20-21). It is always good to know where to go for secure and safety. As a child I was afraid of storms especially the thunder and lightning. I thought God was angry with me or that I had done something wrong. Later in life, after going to the Mourners’ Bench, I became responsible for my own sins, I understood that God loves me, and the storms were a way of communicating that love.

Later, when I read “The fear of humans brings a snare but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.” (Proverbs 29:25) Then they were able to understand that God controls the time of blessing us and helping us. I hope that we all will come to that understanding, that this too is His will for us. Thurston G. Frazier read this scripture and composed the song, “Oh To Be Kept By Jesus.” In it he wrote: “…kept by the power of God. Kept from the world unspotted, kept where treading where Jesus trod, kept by his power divine, kept thru toil and trials, kept by His hand in mine. Kept by His Holy Spirit to me this is best of all. I am safe in His holy keeping. He will ever hear my call. Oh to be kept by Jesus Lord at His feet I fall. I would be nothing with Him. He shall be my all and all.”

When I travel in a car I invite The Holy Spirit to direct, guide and protect me from accidents. An automobile in the hand of some drivers is like driving without the thought or effort it takes to control. As my daddy would say, “All those horses under that hood — that is too much to control without sound mind and a pure heart.” Here in the 21st century there all kinds of storms raging in our lives every day. The only shelter that can protect us is the Creator He is the Captain of my Salvation I hope He is yours also.

“A human who has a friend must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24). Charles Albert Tindley, read this verse and penned the song: “Thou who rulest the wind and water stand by me. When I am growing old and feeble stand by me, when my life becomes a burden and I am nearing chilly Jordan O Thou ‘lily of the valley’ Stand by me.” This is the joy of my salvation. I hope it is yours.

Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris
Pastoral Counselor
**PRAYER — Practicing a spiritual discipline that includes daily prayer for metropolitan Richmond in concert with the Richmond Hill community.**

I want to allow my life to be interrupted by God, to be open to divine possibilities. For most of this year, prayer has been an interruption to my sleep, my work, my conversations, my free time and my thoughts. At points, I wrestled to stay present, to stop what I am doing to engage God and pray for the city. At other times, it has been a respite and provided a needed refuge from my to-do list, anxious thoughts and addiction to self-sufficiency.

As much as I have both enjoyed and struggled with praying 3 times a day, it has become a needed and necessary interruption. The discipline of communal prayer helps me remember to turn toward God in the midst of my busy day, to unplug from my work and my story enough to lift up the healing of the city, to ask God for help, grace and strength. I am reminded that I am not alone, that God is at work, that whatever I am thinking about, working on or dealing with, I can lay down for a few minutes. I can receive these few minutes as a gift and an invitation to listen, be renewed and focus on God. That is indeed a beautiful blessing.

Tuesday Mornings and Thursday Evenings are my favorite prayer times. I lead prayer on Tuesday mornings. I turn on the lights, light the candles, unlock the doors and read prayers and scripture. Something comes alive in me when I have to wake up a bit early to be ready and seated before everyone arrives. I get to prepare the way. It is an honor and privilege to usher our community into the heart of God. The responsibility has been delightful.

On Thursday evenings, Annie Campbell leads prayer by telling stories. This is a spirit-filled time. Jesus told stories and the bible is full of them because stories are a good tool for opening our understanding and a way to renew our hearts and minds. When Annie tells stories, Chapel is transformed into a space of imagination and creativity, a space of hearts and minds. When Annie tells stories, Chapel is transformed into a space of imagination and creativity, a space of hearts and minds. When Annie tells stories, Chapel is transformed into a space of imagination and creativity, a space of hearts and minds.

During evening prayer, Mary’s Magnificat has resonated with me. I have the words memorized but it is the way they reverberates through my chest and head that is striking to me. It feels like something is being prayed through me. Mary’s song is a signpost for me to continue to say yes, Jesus, to whatever it is that the spirit wants to birth in and through me and to respond by praising God for his greatness, favor, mercy, strength, provision and help. Her response to God penetrates my being.

Experiencing prayer in these new ways has been stretching which has created more space for God.

**Ebony Walden**  
*Urban Service Corps*

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**Journey on**

RUAH XII graduated last month. RUAAH is a signature program here at Richmond Hill. Since its beginning in September 1993, over 250 people have completed deep soul-searching work in this unique school of spiritual guidance.

Through retreat and reading, prayer, meeting and writing, the Companions (as RUAAH students refer to each other) expand their knowledge and deepen their understanding of their particular journeys. Over a two-year period, they explore a wide array of topics, including the use of Scripture in discernment, contemplative prayer, history of spirituality, dream work, depth psychology, social transformation, masculine & feminine spirituality, and the theology of spiritual guidance.

On the Saturday evening before the class graduated, alumni of the program were invited to surprise Ben Campbell by attending evening prayer service. By 6 p.m. the Chapel was filled with grateful alums, and the expression on Ben’s face was priceless as he walked in with Annie. Prayers, recollections and stories flowed.

At one point during the evening, Ben was asked to share his thoughts on the RUAAH program. “My experience has been that this school is a journey,” he said. “Actually, my whole life has been one long journey,” he continued. “And my daily prayer has been: ‘Couldn’t somebody please just give me a map?’”

Laughter erupted. After all, we’ve all been there before, haven’t we? Sometimes humor serves another purpose and holds a larger truth. I went to bed that evening wondering about that map — what might it look like as a help in discerning what comes next?

When I sat with my cup of coffee the next morning I had an epiphany. If you are searching for your way, a map is not necessarily the best tool you might want to use. While the map shows all the roads, it’s of little use if you lack two things: some idea of where you are now and, where you are going.

When it comes to discernment, vocation and location are critical keys. But remember this, do not confuse the road with your path.

Yes, external waymarks are critically important to one’s journey. But what put you on the path in the first place? Some heart-felt nudge or leap, no doubt. There is no FitBit or odometer that allows you to know you’ve reached a long sought goal. What to do? Keep a close watch on those feelings. Find a Companion on the way.

Take heart, and journey on.

Richard Rumble  
*Communications Director*

For more information on RUAAH, please contact Brenda Giannini, Dean of the RUAAH School of Spiritual Guidance, at Richmond Hill. (804)783-7903 or Interim Pastoral Director Rev. Janie Walker at jwalker@richmondhillva.org
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.

For the spirit of the city
July 2015
Metro Richmond at Prayer
In July:
Pray for Governments and Governing Bodies of Metropolitan Richmond.

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

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.