

UPDATE

For the spirit of the city



2209 EAST GRACE STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23223

NOVEMBER 2017

TENDING THE SPIRIT

A Grateful Heart: Our Source of Prayer

Without any prompting of our own, there are times when blessings and praises flow from our lips with ease and our hearts are filled with joy and gratefulness. In that flow, more than at any other time, we know without a doubt that we have connected with the presence, the work and the blessing of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Whether reading aloud or silently, there are also times when the Holy Scriptures will prompt the same response in us. Whether it's the Magnificat, where Mary cries out with joy, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour" (Luke 1:46-47), or one of the psalmist who blesses the Lord without measure, we enter into the joy expressed by one who is fully aware of the goodness of God in their life. We receive a blessing. We become a blessing. Our humanity is enlivened. We become fully alive and God is glorified. Such a blessing is indeed a time of Thanksgiving. I can only imagine that such delight must have been integral to what prompted early settlers to set aside a day to be intentional about expressing gratitude and thanks to God.

Apart from those impromptu moments of blessings, we have so much more to be thankful for in this life, each and every day. However, the reality is: we are not always so ready to give thanks. Sometimes the constant demands of life, its struggles and worries, give more room to defeat than to a heart of thanks. Or we forget in the midst of busyness and pressures to just pause and give thanks for all that God has done, and continues to do in our lives.

Rendering heartfelt thanksgiving is not always easy. So, having an intentional time and practice around giving thanks is surely good for us all. Sometimes it really is a sacrifice to offer praise and thanks. It could be that we just aren't able to do so, or don't feel like it. We're struggling.

We're weary. Or maybe, we feel like God has let us down. We think God is distant, like God is far away, or doesn't really care about what's going on in our life. Sometimes it's simply that the painful winds of loss blow through and send us spiraling into a despondent state.

Failing to recognize that all of the things mentioned here are prayers within themselves, some would advise us to, "Just pray." However, the better invitation at such times might be an invitation to read particular psalms. The engagement with them can make a profound difference. And yes, as with any invitation, we do have the choice to take hold of the sacred resources that come our way. We also have the choice every day to give God thanks.

*God is also willing
to connect us to the
resources we need
to get us back to a
place of gratefulness*

When we do choose to take up a psalm (or song) or any other sacred text, more often than not, we are encouraged to verbalize our situation to God. Then, we realize that God does more than change our situations or help us through our problems. God changes our minds and hearts. We realize that no matter what we face, through God's power our minds become focused on goodness and our hearts are made grateful. The grip our struggles have over us is released. We're strengthened by God's peace, and refueled by God's joy.

When it comes to prayer, as we have traditionally known it, its most profound gift to us is the acknowledgment of how desperately dependent we are on God. With the acknowledgment, prayer is known to be more than inviting God into a few select places in our lives. Rather, it becomes a freedom to let God roam through the fullness of who we are and the fullness of our concerns. The good news is that God is willing and able to work with it all. The "hand of the Lord is not heavy that it cannot save, nor God's ear heavy that God cannot hear." (Is. 59:1).

One of the many psalms which opens my heart and leads me back to gratefulness and thanksgiving is Psalm 24, particularly verses 1, 2 and 7: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For God hath founded it upon

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TENDING THE SPIRIT

the seas, and established it upon the floods...Lift up your heads, O Gates! Be lifted up, O Ancient doors! That the King of Glory may come in."

Sitting with this psalm gets my eyes off myself; it helps me to focus back on the goodness of God. It reminds me that I am not in control, and that I serve a Mighty God, who is in control. As I recognize how much I need God, it keeps me in a place of humility and dependency on God. It helps me to recognize how much I have to be thankful for, even for the little things I often forget. I become fully aware that there is no need for a prayer deficit. The Lord is always willing to listen to our requests, petitions and our desires; to bless us and fill us with joy. God is also willing to connect us to the resources we need to get us back to a place of gratefulness.

God is the giver of all good gifts. We were never intended to be fully self-sufficient in this life. A grateful heart reminds us that, ultimately, God is our provider and all blessings and gifts are graciously given to us by God. God loves to give good gifts to all of us. God delights in our thankfulness and pours out the Spirit in abundance upon those who give thanks and praise. And, as David Steindl-Rast would say, "A prayer is always Thanksgiving, in one way or another."

As our hearts flow with thoughts of gratefulness and thanksgiving, may the door of blessings continually swing open to us. May God's presence be known to us and our spirits be refreshed and renewed in God.

Let our grateful hearts be our source of prayer.

Rev. Janie M. Walker
Co-Pastoral Director

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REVIVE RICHMOND

Choosing Forgiveness

Is forgiveness selfish? I was surprised to hear myself say that it is a few years ago while being interviewed in response to the Penn State Jerry Sandusky scandal. I was living in State College at the time. I didn't mean it negatively, but it sounded that way, and I immediately felt like I needed some forgiveness myself.

Forgiveness isn't simple. We don't say, *I forgive you*, and that's that. It's a process that often takes time. It isn't about forgetting the harm or offense either. Nor is it a free pass for another to keep harming, as if it condones another's behavior. Forgiveness holds others accountable while providing space for justice to occur apart from vengeance and revenge. It requires a strength and courage unlike most anything else.

Several years ago, I visited the home of Corrie Ten Boom in the Netherlands. She and her family were arrested by the Gestapo during World War II and sent to concentration camps for stowing Jewish refugees in a hiding place they'd created in their house. Most of her family was killed as a result. Afterward, inspired by her Christian faith, she devoted herself to healing wounds throughout Europe.

"Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality," she wrote for Guideposts Magazine in 1972. "Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that."

She'd found that forgiveness dramatically impacts the life of the forgiver even more than the one being forgiven. While forgiveness hopefully leads to reconciliation, reconciliation isn't a requirement for extending it. The immediate benefit of forgiveness is a freedom provided to the one who offers it. Ironically, as long as you hold a grudge, it holds you.

I'm convinced that forgiveness is key to on-going growth and a deeper, fuller life. It opens us to love and may be the greatest act of love we can offer. It involves recognizing the humanity of others, regardless of their behavior (Luke 23:34), and accepting the paradoxical truth that God makes the sun to rise on both good and bad alike (Matthew 5:45). Released from the desire for revenge and the weight of regret, those who forgive are free to interact with the world in new and generative ways. But it clearly starts with self-care.

Desmond Tutu, in his book, *The Book of Forgiving*, says in no uncertain terms, that forgiveness is not a choice you make for someone else; it's a choice you make for yourself. Self-interest is inherent to forgiveness. It frees us to go on living and loving others. It sounds selfish – forgiveness begins with me – but it has to start somewhere. Perhaps selfish isn't always a bad word.

Rev. Joel Blunk
Co-Pastoral Director

Pray for the Persons in Financial Need in Metropolitan Richmond.

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 2017

November 5, 2017. 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 12, 2017. 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 19, 2017. 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 26, 2017. 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.

Let's Celebrate Our 30th Anniversary
 AN EVENING OF SONG & CELEBRATION

Thursday, November 30, 7:30-9:00 pm



Come for a spirited Evening of Song & Celebration. In addition to Jim Bennett and the regular crew, our guest musicians include Oak Grove Elementary School (under the direction of Tevin Ware), St. Peter's choir (under the direction of Rose Carter), Kevin Davis, Rev. Drew Willson, Cora Armstrong, and Tony Martin of Deep Passion Ministries. Come and celebrate 30 years of praying and working for the healing and transformation of metropolitan Richmond!

Community Worship Service Moves to Tuesdays in 2018

Beginning in January 2018, our weekly Community Worship Service will move from Monday to Tuesday evenings. This change will provide our residents with a few additional hours of Sabbath rest and needed time together as "a family." The shift will happen on Tuesday, January 2. The service will continue to be held in the chapel at the same time as before, 5:30 PM, and be followed by a community meal in our refectory. We hope the change will not be an inconvenience and that you will plan to join us then as now, as we continue to work and pray for the healing of metropolitan Richmond.

Micah celebrates Key Coordinators

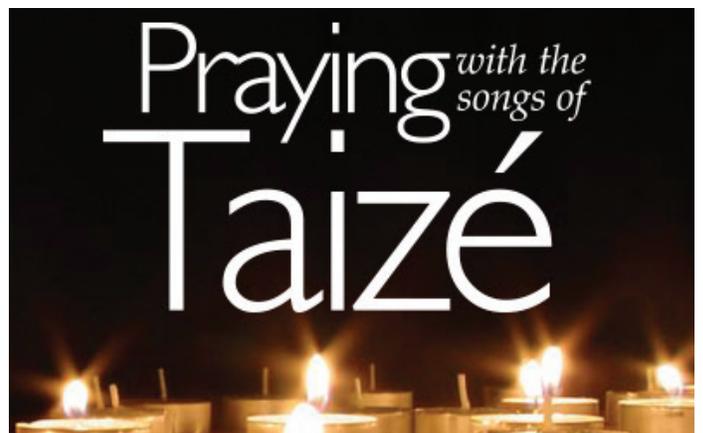
Richmond Hill hosted the Micah Association's Fall "Celebrating Key Coordinators" event on Thursday, November 9, 2017. We celebrated, sang, and engaged in important conversations, as we paused to give thanks. We reflected on what has been, where we are now, and where we dream of going as we seek to be faithful to Micah's mission of walking humbly, loving kindness, and doing justice...in our schools for every child, to help every child believe "I can achieve."



COMMUNITY NEWS: DeBorah Cannady is now the Spiritual Director for Richmond Hill. Mary Lewis will take over as our Retreat Coordinator. And we wish Betty Jane Hagan blessings and all the best as she transitions back into the larger community. Thank you for your good work and kind service, Betty Jane!

"Praying With The Songs of Taizé" is moving to First Tuesdays in 2018

Beginning in January, our monthly Taizé service will move to the first Tuesday evening of each month. Our first time praying the songs of Taizé in the new year will occur on Tuesday night, January 2, at 7:30 PM. We hope to see you there and that you will also help us spread the word.



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 \$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.

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.*

Take a day in the studio...



Facilitator: Brenda Giannini opens us to the sacred dimensions of our lives through the gifts of the visual arts. Suggested donation: \$30.00 (includes lunch) To register, please contact Mary Lewis, at (804) 783-7903 or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

Take a break from the rush and hurry of your busy day and join us in a creative retreat in the inspiring, prayer-soaked walls of Richmond Hill. Slip into the spiritual rhythm of prayer and quiet here. Enjoy personal time with your creative self. Our art space provides a perfect place for you to connect with your inner spirit while using your creativity. We look forward to having you with us!



Join the Richmond Hill community for a weekend retreat patterned after Taizé, “that little springtime” in the Southern French Alps. Our weekend together will consist of small group formation, conscious work in the community, a chance to learn about both the mission of Taizé and Richmond Hill, and, of course, time to pray the songs of Taizé. Each of our regular prayer times will be done in Taizé fashion incorporating the songs of Taizé, silence, and our daily prayers for metropolitan Richmond.

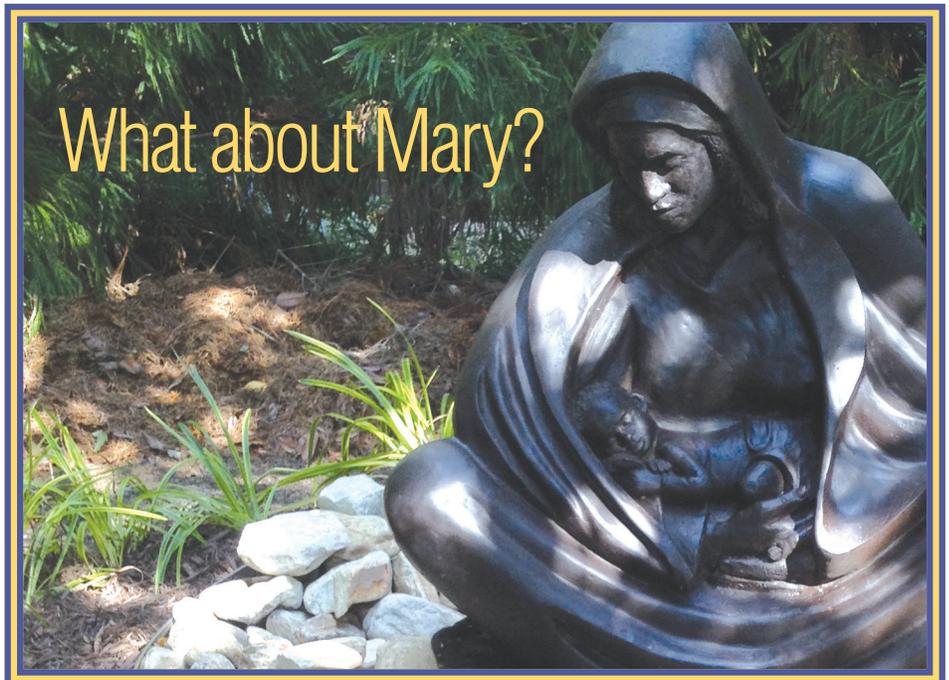
The weekend will be lead by Co-Pastoral Director, Rev. Joel Blunk, who has spent two weeks in the Taizé community, and musician Jim Bennett, who leads the Richmond Hill monthly service, *Praying With The Songs of Taizé*.

- Pray the songs of Taizé
- Experience community at Richmond Hill
- Spend time in small group discussion
- Learn about both the Taizé and Richmond Hill communities
- Share delicious common meals
- Be renewed for faithful living out in the world
- Seek the healing of metropolitan Richmond through prayer, hospitality, racial reconciliation and spiritual development

Register on-line at richmondhillva.org or call Richmond Hill at (804) 783-7903 ext.10

Suggested donation: \$180. Space limited to 30

Advent Retreat



Mary is the central character of the Advent story. She listens deeply, she ponders, she says yes, and bears God into the world. Her example

is striking. Mary appears throughout the gospels supporting and encouraging Jesus, accompanying him through death. Aren't we meant to do the same? To co-create, nurture, accompany, and suffer with? Francis of Assisi is credited with saying, *We are the mother of Christ when we carry him in our heart and body by love and a pure and sincere conscience. And we give birth to him through our holy works which ought to shine on others by our example.*

You are invited to join us at Richmond Hill for an Advent Retreat to explore Mary's story and the implications for the healing of our selves and metropolitan Richmond. We will consider how Mary's nature invites contemplation, compassion, creativity, and ecological concern. Join Richmond Hill co-pastoral director Joel Blunk and Kristen Saacke Blunk, who works in environmental restoration, for a time of discovery and exploration. Our time together will include:

- Rest and renewal in the company of the Richmond Hill community
- Praying the hours in the Monte Maria Chapel
- Consideration of Mary as an archetype of the divine feminine
- Meditation around the Richmond Hill statue of Mary
- Walking the labyrinth and exploring other contemplative prayer techniques
- Singing, storytelling, and other forms of artistic expression

DECEMBER 1-3, 2017

4:00 pm Friday – 4:00 pm Sunday

Suggested donation: \$180 per person

Contact: Mary Lewis at 783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

For the spirit of the city



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November 2017



Metro Richmond at Prayer

In November:

Pray for the Persons in Financial Need in Metropolitan Richmond.

RICHMOND HILL MISSION STATEMENT

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.

Share your comments, or sign up to receive our monthly printed UPDATE newsletter here: rrumble@richmondhillva.org

If you would like to subscribe to eUPDATE, our email newsletter, go here: eepurl.com/cNLLbj

You can find us, like us, share us: **facebook:** RichmondHillVa **twitter:** RichmondHillVa2 **instagram:** richmondhillva

