

# TENDING THE SPIRIT

# The steadying thread

Day by day we find cause to reflect, sometimes leading to us to repent. In doing so, we make the decision to turn away from that which saddens and distracts us, and turn our attention to that

which is good and right and makes us alive. Transition is like that.

In his book. Meditations of the Heart, Howard Thurman shares many poetic musings of what one might encounter when seeking to integrate the inner and outer life. The reflection below, written by Thurman almost 65 years ago, captures this present spirit of reflecting, repenting and deciding, which is so common in life here at Richmond Hill.

There is no question that we count on *The One Thread* — *The Strange Thread* — *The Steadying Thread*. It is indeed the one we pull on knowing that a source greater than ourselves holds the other end. By that source we are empowered to take our eyes off of the sick, high-flying, failing and tangled places we find places which shine with hope and promise Many of us connected to Richmond Hill have

ourselves in and turn our eyes to the "not yet"

made a commitment to view our vocations (*what-ever they may be*) as a call to stewardship of metropolitan Richmond. At the same time we commit to

### THE THREADS IN MY HAND

Only one end of the threads, I hold in my hand. The threads go many ways, linking my life with other lives.

One thread comes from a life that is sick; it is taut with anguish And always there is the lurking fear that the life will snap. I hold it tenderly. I must not let it go...

One thread comes from a high-flying kite; It quivers with the mighty current of fierce and holy dreaming Invading the common day with far-off places and visions bright...

One thread comes from the failing hands of an old, old friend. Hardly aware am I of the moment when the tight line slackened and there was nothing at all -nothing...

*One thread is but a tangled mass that won't come right; Mistakes, false starts, lost battles, angry words — a tangled mass; I have tried so hard, but it won't come right...* 

One thread is a strange thread — it is my steadying thread; When I am lost, I pull it hard and find my way, When I am saddened, I tighten my grip and gladness glides along its quivering path.

When the waste places of my spirit appear in arid confusion, the thread becomes a channel of newness of life.

One thread is a strange thread - it is my steadying thread. God's hand holds the other end...<sup>1</sup> being a steward of Richmond Hill. These commitments we understand are an extension of our greater commitment to be stewards of God's creation. Any clarity we presently have about what these commitments mean is coupled with a great appreciation for the relationship between transition and transformation. As we seek to be transformed into the fullness of our created selves. we are ever mindful that periods of transition, as well as life events which catapult them, are nothing less than fuel for transformation. Even amongst administrative duties, conversations, committee

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Coordinator of Spiritual Guidance Deborah Streicker dstreicker@richmondhillva.org <u>Guest Master</u>

DeBorah Cannady retreats@richmondhillva.org

Development Director Debbie Winans development@richmondhillva.org

Communications Director Richard Rumble rrumble@richmondhillva.org

Holistic Pastoral Care & Counseling The Rev. Dr. Alice Harris aharris@richmondhillva.org

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#### TENDING THE SPIRIT

meetings, program planning, worship and prayers, we find a myriad of causes to rejoice and to regret. Through it all, more clarity comes.

"Bloom where you are planted" is a phrase commonly heard among us. The phrase takes on a whole new meaning as life's events become reminders that all, but one, of the threads we hold in our hands are connected to the threads that rest in the hands of "the other" in our lives. These threads continually reinforce the message that there are some things to let go of, as well as some things to hold on to. Threads that are released gives the "other" the freedom to act and create. Likewise, we each find freedom to be ourselves when threads of our calling are released to our hands. Nonetheless, the practice of discernment is called for continuously. It is the means by which we give prayerful consideration to which of the threads we are called to let go of and which to hold on to.

Weaved into existence by all the threads is a unique tapestry, made up of the interesting stories that leave their own imprint on us all. We call the tapestry "Life." There is a golden thread in the tapestry. It is *The Steadying Thread* — the thread that has guided us to the "Island of Peace within our own souls."<sup>2</sup> It is the place where the inner and the outer find agreement.

Reverend Janie M. Walker, Interim Pastoral Director

 Thurman, Howard. 1981 ed. *Meditations of the Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press. p. 126-127.
 ibid, p. 17.

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1-2 3	artments Tending the Spirit, Revive Richmond Richmond at Prayer, Community News Retreats, Schools, Groups, and Classes	6 7 8	Opportunities for Worship, The Care Corner Reflections on Ministry, In Direction Prayer Cycle

# R E V I V E R I C H M O N D

# **Reviving through education**

The Armstrong Priorities Freshman Academy T (APFA) is the realization of a series of conversations by East End Clergy and Community Leaders on what could be done to improve conditions in the East End of Richmond. Though many important concerns were talked about, there was an agreement that the best starting point to revive our community would be to focus on education. We specifically agreed that our initial focus would be on the only high school in the East End. Thus we began with a goal to increase the graduation rate at Armstrong High School over an initial period of at least five years.

The APFA is designed to offer focused academic and social support to a cohort of 60 freshman that are entering Armstrong High School. This cohort of students would receive academic support by offering additional math and English courses along with tutoring, mentoring and after school programs at Armstrong High School by teachers and tutors. Further assistance would be offered by volunteers and mentors that would assist with afterschool and community activities.

With much prayer, planning and perseverance, the Armstrong Priorities Freshman Academy began operation in the late fall of 2014 with the hiring of Program Coordinator, Jessica Anderson. Ms. Anderson immediately began working to bring the program into reality by coordinating with Principal Hawkins and the faculty at Armstrong High School to identify the initial cohort. The school year ended with a retreat for several of the Academy students at the Westview on the James at the end of the 2014 - 2015 school year.

The Armstrong Priorities Freshman Academy (APFA) began its second year of operation in August 2015 with a full staff of teachers and volunteers ready to assist a new cohort of students to a better academic and social experience.

The Armstrong Priorities Freshman Academy is supported by Richmond Hill, Baptist, Episcopal, Catholic, and United Methodist congregations both in the East End of Richmond and the greater Richmond community. Additional support is provided by community partners like Bon Secours Health System, 7th District City Councilmember, Dr. Cynthia Newbille, 7th District School Board member, Donald Coleman, United Methodist Conference and several foundations not to mention Richmond Public Schools along with Principal Hawkins and the faculty of Armstrong High School. We solicit your continued prayers along with volunteer and financial support of the Academy as we seek to revive the educational opportunities of our community.

*Rev. Dr. Herbert Ponder, Vice Chair & Secretary Armstrong Priorities Freshman Academy* 

# COMMUNITY NEWS

# Pray for Public, Non-profit, and Religious 2015 Social Service Work and Ministries in Metropolitan Richmond. October

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

October 4, 2015. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all in need of social services, all social service departments and caseworkers; for a partnership between the church and other institutions serving the needy.

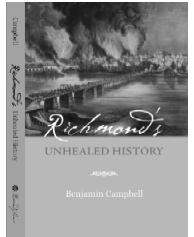
October 11, 2015. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all in need of mental health services, all mental health workers, counselors, and treatment facilities.

October 18, 2015. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all who suffer from addiction, dependency or co-dependency of any sort, for twelve-step programs, recovery programs, therapists, and addiction counselors.

October 25, 2015. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For emergency shelters, women's shelters, clinics, and feeding programs; for recreation programs, youth programs, juvenile counseling, and young people's shelters.

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# The Spirit of Richmond Hill is Alive in its Facilities and Grounds

t Richmond Hill, the Spirit often manifests itself in one per-Ason's life—and, then, others discover the same Spirit alive in them. Well, it's happened again—this time with a call to care for our facilities and grounds.

A generous donor has agreed to match donations to our capital budget up to \$25,000 if made by the end of 2015. \$5,000 has already been donated toward the cost of repairing a waterdamaged wall in the chapel behind the altar; leaving us with \$20,000 more to go. The facilities committee has received estimates for 13 other repair or replacement projects ranging from \$250 to \$18,000. Another 10 larger projects are being assessed and estimates are being considered. Please help us make the most of this opportunity — your donations are needed to match every dollar! Are you called to join this "community of caring" for Richmond Hill's facilities and grounds? This is a great opportunity!

For more information, please contact Debbie Winans at 783-7903, ext. 14 or email: development@richmondhillva.org



# Lecture [2] "Cultural Bias" with Dr. Allen Lewis

# 7:30 P.M. MONDAY, OCT. 26, 2015

r. Lewis explores the definition of cultural bias, how people interface with difference, and steps to manage bias. About the lecturer: Dr. Allen Lewis is Head of JMU Department of Health Sciences and author of We Are All Racists: The Truth about Cultural Bias.

The 45-minute lecture will be followed by facilitated conversation and group processing time among the audience. Join us for worship at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m., lecture at 7:30 p.m. A requested donation of \$20 includes both dinner and the lecture. To register, contact DeBorah Cannady at retreats@richmondhillva.org or by phone at 804-783-7903.

# **Armstrong Leadership Program** is now seeking mentors

f your calling is to serve high school students, please consider becoming a mentor with the Armstrong Leadership Program. We invite you to join us, with opportunities in mentoring, tutoring, job shadowing, facilitation, or assisting with college preparation. ALP is designed to cultivate a team of selected students who are committed to growth in areas of personal development and leadership training. With a series of workshops, retreats, cultural exposure, tutoring, service learning opportunities and one-on-one mentoring, students are transformed into emerging leaders within their school and the greater community. For more information, please contact Yvette Davis Rajput at 783-7903, ext. 13 or email: yrajput@richmondhillva.org

# 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.

#### Upcoming Facilitated Retreats: Sat. - Sun. Nov. 7-8

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 Pleas register in advance. Space is limited.



# **CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS**

Tuesdays, 4:45 - 5:45 p.m. Deborah Streicker, 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: 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.* 

Come up to Richmond Hill for a 24-hour retreat and prepare your heart for the Christmas Season.

In this annual retreat Annie Campbell will provide a quiet, contemplative opportunity for reflecting on the year that is past and preparing for a new one beginning with the birth of our Lord.

Annie is a gifted storyteller, and loves family traditions. She also loves Advent, that quiet beginning before everything happens.

This retreat will include time for listening, conversation, reflection, and quiet, at a pace you set for yourself, in the context of Richmond Hill's rhythm of life.





T his year, we're covering the economic, political and social implications of our metropolitan public transportation system. Our goal? Envision a healthy, just and efficient public transportation system which serves us all. Join clergy from a cross-denominational spectrum to build relationships and reflect on how the

# **THURS** OCTOBER 15

7:00 am Prayer in Chapel
7:30 am Light Breakfast
8:00 am Panel presentations and discussion
Noon Prayer and Charge from Dean John Kinney with Public Proclamation at the Overlook

12:30 pm Lunch

Lord takes the concrete realities of our communities and transforms them into the Kingdom of God.

# Pre-register please!

Lunch available (\$10 donation). Contact Richmond Hill to register at 804-783-7903 or email: mcraighead@richmondhillva.org



Event co-sponsors: Richmond Hill; Virginia Union University, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology

### 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** *Leader: Jim Bennett*

, . . . . . .

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 candle lit chapel. Using just a few words, the songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over many times, the hope is this reality will gradually penetrate one's whole being. Meditative singing thus becomes a way of listening to God.

We invite you to participate in our practice of Taizé which includes singing, prayer for Metropolitan Richmond, and a period of silence. Jim Bennett is a skilled musician and leads this time of worship with a variety of musical instruments.

# SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE

Cannady at 783-7903.

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

# **EUCHARIST FOR GENERATIONAL HEALING** *5th Mondays at 7:30 p.m.*

Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a Eucharist for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God's healing into your family, including the generations that have gone before and the generations that will come after you. Please bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of your ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). For more information call DeBorah

# The solid foundation

We are human, therefore we are prone to making mistakes. The Holy Spirit who lives within us gives us strength but he does not take away our free will of choice. There are times when we make choices that are not good for us or others. They may cause embarrassment and pain. Our humanness can lead us away from God or draw us to Him through Jesus Christ His Son our Savior. Jesus Christ the righteous one pleads with the Father on our behalf.

We are alike in many ways but there is only one of each of us. Some people desire to copy bits and pieces of other people's personalities and try to make themselves into something they are not. In this way they become a copy instead of an original. Let us remember that an original is always better than a copy even with the best copier. Let us be our selves for no one else can.

A child knows where to turn when they hurt. They turn to loving arms who will greet them and gentle hands to dry their tears. Where do we turn when we hurt? Some of us turn to family, friends, a therapist or others for comfort. There are others who are wise enough to turn to God. Because all other help is only a bandage not a cure. The only true cure lies is seeking God. All others can help by pointing us to God where we are safe in His arms.

But the solid foundation that God has laid cannot be shaken. On it are written these words, "The Lord knows those who are His and whosoever says that they belongs to the Lord must turn away from wrong doing." (2 Timothy 2:19). God's truth is revealed to us in the Bible and that is where we can test what is right and wrong for us. Building our life on God's truth is the only foundation.

What a wonderful, majestic, mighty God we serve! In the beauty of God's creation we are made to realize how wondrous is His power to create and to love. In His hands are the deep places of the earth the strength of the hills also. O come, let us worship and bow down let us kneel before the Lord our maker. (Psalm 95:6). What else can we do to honor God? Let us worship His majesty today.

> *Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris Pastoral Counselor*

### IN DIRECTION

### REFLECTION ON THE RULE

# **HEALING**— *Commiting one's own life to inner healing and to the healing of the larger community of metropolitan Richmond.*

Common questions dealing with sickness are: What ails you? Do you have a common cold? Do you have constant indigestion or digestive disorders? Do you or a loved one have cancer? The myriad of health defects we can experience over our lifetime can be extensive. Fear and stress work with our poor diet choices to really punish our Godgiven temple. Personally, I am sick of being sick. I want to devote myself to understanding how *Jehovah Rapha* (Jesus) comes into our lives and makes us whole in Him. Through His word I hope to illuminate the path that I am on so that others may benefit as well.

May we start some good old-fashioned wisdom? "My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ears to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart." (Prov. 4:20) To me this verse is speaking of the digestive system of our souls. With food, our mouths are used to consume our daily bread and then it is broken down in the stomach to nourish our bodies. With our souls, this verse shows us that our eyes and ears consume our Daily Bread from God, and it is digested in our hearts. Since what manifests in the natural is from the spirit, it is safe to say that our heart diet and stomach diet hold hands in a lot of ways. We should quick to understand both.

It is not about TIME! It is about SPACE! Look at Isaiah 58:5 which says "...a day to humble oneself?" He is showing His servants that we cannot complete a period of time for our healing to come — but we are to lay down everything before Him to remove the space between us! "Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring forth quickly." (Isaiah 58:8).

I have come to a place of listening for God's instruction for me, His son, today! I am only concerned with being one with my Father! No Space. No boundaries or restrictions; only freedom in Christ.

So, now I fast — fresh fruit and vegetable juices only. Detoxification has begun and my body is aching and cramping as it expels toxins that took up way too much space in my body. Each day that passes I experience a glimpse of God's light breaking forth! Each day the commitment to wholeness in Him grows stronger. May He continue His work in my body and heart as I digest everything He says to me. May He inspire others through this experience to seek freely our magnificent and wonderful Healer!

# Brian Lamm Urban Service Corps

**Brian Lamm** arrived in the Richmond Hill community in August this year when he joined the Urban Service Corps Class of 2015-16. He is a member of Movement Church in Richmond.

# Leadership In Action

Prior to the first day of school, student leaders participated in an overnight retreat for three days at Richmond Hill for the 1st Leadership In Action Summer Institute.

The purpose of the Institute aimed to support, develop and encourage urban youth to think critically about what makes for highly effective leaders in school and community. The focus was to encourage students to participate in and explore self-reflection, the discovery of their gifts, strengths and abilities as individuals and as a group while becoming better servant leaders.

To start off the institute, students experienced the labyrinth walk led by Linda Carr-Kraft, daughter of Rev. Dabney J. Carr for whom the Richmond Hill labyrinth was dedicated. Experiencing the labyrinth walk known affectionately as the "Jerusalem Mile" set the tone for the day, as it prepared the students for a quiet period of focus, intent and personal reflection. Additional activities included: a service project at the school as the students helped teachers at Armstrong High School prepare their classrooms for the new school year. Many of the teachers stated, "It was great to have the students come in and help in this way".

The students listened to a spirit filled presentation by Rev. Janie Walker, Interim Pastoral Director on leadership styles and servant leadership. Additionally, Council Members Don Cowles and Tiont Williams provided a few words of inspiration and encouragement to the students. During one afternoon session, Benjamin Ross led students on a tour of historic Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church where they learned of the leadership of Rev. John Jasper, founder and community leader.

Additionally, the students selected the first ALP Executive Committee: Djimon Waddy, President; Auntey Smith, Vice-President; Diamond Thompson, Secretary; and Trei Young, Public Relations Representative. Also, action committees were developed: Campaign Cool/ALP Service Projects, Community Outreach and Tutoring. The committees were designed to provide examples of leadership in action, develop and create positive activities that will provide assistance and support within their school and community. The institute culminated with review and evaluation as well as a day of FUN at Kings Dominion Park. When asked to share thoughts concerning the Institute one student stated: "We got a lot accomplished and even got a chance to hash out our differences while preparing to work better together as a team for the upcoming school year."

The ALP staff and students are grateful for your generous support and efforts in making this enriching experience possible. Thanks.

*Facilitated and submitted by Yvette Davis Rajput, Director and Marvin V. Roane, Assistant Director* 



2209 East Grace Street Richmond, Virginia 23223 (804) 783-7903 www.richmondhillva.org

October 2015

**Return Service Requested** 

Prayer

Richmond at

Metro

In October:

# Pray for Public, Non-profit, and Religious Social Service Work and Ministries 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 addiction, dependency, and co-dependency. The Council, residents, and staff of Richmond Hill.

TUESDAYS: Our citizens who live in Hanover County, the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and Manager. The print and broadcast media. The churches of metropolitan Richmond: members and clergy. All who live in poverty. All who suffer from mental illness.

WEDNESDAYS: The Governor of Virginia, the General Assembly, and all who work in State Government. All who work in businesses which provide services to others. All who work in construction. Hospitals and nursing homes: patients, residents, and staff; all who provide health care. Victims of violent crime; all who commit violent crime. All senior citizens.

THURSDAYS: Our citizens who live in Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg, the town and city Councils and Managers. All who work in banks and finance; all making financial decisions for greater Richmond. Prisons and jails of metropolitan Richmond: prisoners and staff. All who are unemployed or underemployed. All public servants.

FRIDAYS: Our citizens who live in Henrico County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in the manufacturing industry in metropolitan Richmond. The police, fire, and rescue workers. The courts. All young people. All who hurt, need inner healing, or are unable to love.

SATURDAYS: Our citizens who live in Chesterfield County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in retail trade in metropolitan Richmond, and those who own our businesses. Counselors and spiritual directors. The Sisters of the Visitation of Monte Maria. All victims of abuse; all perpetrators of abuse. SUNDAYS: Our citizens who live in the Counties of Charles City, Goochland, Powhatan, and New Kent, the Supervisors, School Boards, and Managers. An end to racism and racial prejudice. All places of prayer or worship: churches, mosques, and synagogues. Universities, colleges, and technical schools. All who seek God.

We pray daily at Richmond Hill for persons or situations for which our prayers are requested. Call us at 804-783-7903.



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