Preserving the Facade

One can hardly drive down Broad Street these days without admiring the new look. An emerging development of new buildings, landscape designs and driving patterns to accommodate a new and improved bus transit system. As enjoyable as it is, I am still intrigued by the yet standing façade wall of the old general assembly building which was recently demolished.

During the spring, when the demolishing was at its peak, this iconic building — a landmark for the locals — had its innards exposed! Several drives past the demolition site left me curious about the hoisting that would be required for some parts while other parts were being dismantled — all in the midst of life’s activity in downtown Richmond.

It was just fascinating to look up and see steel beams and pipes, which had previously been hidden behind stone walls, made visible. The beams made an interesting design of internal pathways through the structure. Just fascinating! The beauty of some of the stone, with its detailed and elaborate carvings, got my attention like never before. I imagined that such beautiful stone — sleek and smooth in some places and laden with carvings in others — must have been a major contribution to the beauty of the building’s design. And, I imagined that the design team must have thought of it as a beauty that would last forever.

Even after several drives along the demolition site, my unusual level of curiosity was not satisfied. I took to the web to search for information that I had surely missed concerning this project. I printed out an interesting article from the Richmond Times Dispatch, April 22, 2018. One of the sentences I highlighted in the article read: “The building — actually four different structures melded together in 1976 — was considered a health hazard for employees and visitors because of crumbling asbestos around pipes in ceilings, cracked masonry, and outmoded electrical and other operating systems.”

This statement seemed to sum up the recommendation of the design committee to let go of this iconic landmark; move operations to a temporary new site; and create a new and healthier structure. Inadvertently, it also made clear that it was the hidden non-visible parts and systems in the building that were health hazards to all who worked and entered there. This sentence also helped me to identify the impetus of my curiosity.

I had just completed the facilitation of a retreat with a group of faith leaders from Charlottesville and was preparing to facilitate a second retreat the following week for a small group of Richmonders and a few people from other parts of the state. Both retreats called for an examination of how we might be called to deconstruct the non-visible but humongous and iconic structures around race -- structures erected long before any us were born and surely hazardous to the health and well-being of us all. Years of experience and examination have proven that there are obvious cracks in its masonry and hazardous materials in its outmoded operating systems.

Ironically, those who recognized the danger of these non-visible structures early on have been working at the demolition site for some time. We call it kingdom work. Like the general assembly building, the job has taken longer than anticipated, and in many cases cost us much more than we thought. However, unlike the team that had oversight of the general assembly building, we haven’t been able to provide even a target date for completion. We just know and agree that it must be demolished, and we work steadily and hard toward that end.

In the midst of Richmond’s developing and beautiful downtown landscape, the old general
Revive Richmond

Taking the Pledge

I used to think I didn’t participate in racism. Oh, I certainly don’t if the only way you see racism is through the lens of those white nationalists or other rallies taking place around the country. But then I learned about institutional racism and implicit bias. I came to see that because of my skin color and through no fault of my own, I am treated differently. I came to recognize that I still make internalized judgments of people and situations because the dominant culture has over and over again reinforced in me negative cultural stereotypes. And I decided to try and do something about it. I took the Richmond Pledge to End Racism.

The Richmond Pledge is a personal pledge “to eliminate racism and prejudice, all over the world, one person at a time.” It is a community-wide effort to give people the knowledge and tools they need to actively work to dismantle systemic and institutional racism in concert with other committed people.

As part of this effort, the Richmond Pledge has designed a two-day workshop for folks to reflect, learn, and practice how to develop and maintain their commitment to end racism. Richmond Hill will be hosting this workshop series on October 6 and 20. (See page 5 for details.) The hope is that attendees will find the tools for action and self-reflection useful and want to bring the workshop to their own congregations and organizations.

I hope you will join me in taking the Richmond Pledge to End Racism. And I hope you will consider attending the workshops on Oct. 6 and 20.

Sheryl Johnson
Communications Specialist

The Richmond Pledge to End Racism

I BELIEVE that every person has worth as an individual.
I BELIEVE that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or color.
I BELIEVE that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.
Therefore, from this day forward:
I WILL strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.
I WILL discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.
I WILL treat all people with dignity and respect.
I WILL commit to working with others to transform the Greater Richmond region into a place that treats people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures with justice, equity, and compassion, and I WILL strive daily to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.

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Vicky Bethel
Front Office Assistant
Marvette Craighead

Spiritual Guidance Coordinator
Jabriel Hasan    Hoonie Kwon

Community and Staff

Co-Pastoral Directors
The Rev. Joel Blank
jblank@richmondhillva.org
The Rev. Janie Walker
jwalker@richmondhillva.org

Spiritual Guidance Coordinator
Deborah Cannady
dcannady@richmondhillva.org
Retreat Coordinator
Mary Lewis
retreats@richmondhillva.org
Development Director
Debbie Winans
development@richmondhillva.org
Communications Director
Richard Rumble
rrumble@richmondhillva.org
Facilities Coordinator
David Vinson
facilities@richmondhillva.org
Hospitality Coordinator
Sammy Riggins
hospitality@richmondhillva.org
Hospitality Assistant
James Byrd
Carden
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Marvin Roane
Misc Association
Vicky Bethel
Front Office Assistant
Marvette Craighead

Contemplating so much of what has kept us from being as beautiful and as healthy as we could be reminds me of words from our Christian sacred text: “We fight, not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities; against rulers of darkness in this age…”(Eph 6:12). We fight against what has been, and is, a threat to us all. The real dangers, when discovered, should compel us to act in faith to correct the problem and determine to build something new.

In an attempt to explain the added cost and delay in reconstruction of the general assembly building, a second highlighted sentence in the article read: “Damico said he could not yet quantify the additional cost for preserving the (1912) facade, but he said, ‘It was the right choice for the building. It was the right choice for Richmond, and it was the right choice for Capitol Square.’ “

This statement seemed to confirm my initial thoughts that the beauty of the stone and its carvings may have contributed to the acceptance of the architectural design. However, it also produced more intriguing questions for me (or us) to contemplate: Are we so wedded to our architectural history that we subconsciously take this same posture toward the dismantling of our non-visible structures? Are we willing to pay the added and indeterminate cost? Or, do we delay moving forward because we want to preserve the façade?

Rev. Janie M. Walker
Co-Pastoral Director

Assembly building site still gets my attention. The façade still stands. The land around it is vacant and waiting for a new structure to be put in place. The openly visible dismantling of one of Richmond’s iconic sites to make room for something more beautiful and life-giving surely provides a great symbol for what can be done with the non-visible structures. This is especially needed as we contend with the health and well-being of our Capitol city (and our state).

Groups, and Classes
4-5 Retreats, Schools, Opportunities
6 Worship Services
7 A Special New
8 Prayer Cycle
Metro Richmond at Prayer

Pray for Schools & Educational Institutions of Metropolitan Richmond.

Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children. (Deut 4:9)

September 2, 2018. We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all Superintendents, School Boards, School Administrators, PTAs, teachers, students, and staff.

September 9, 2018. We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all public schools; for students, teachers and support personnel, including cafeteria workers, building and grounds staff, and school bus drivers; for all private and religious schools, pre-schools and daycare centers, and for children in home schools.

September 16, 2018. We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all universities, colleges, seminaries, trade, technical, graduate, and professional schools; for the students, faculty, and staff of these institutions.

September 23, 2018. We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy relationships between parents, teachers, and students; for cooperation between Superintendents and Administrators of public and private schools throughout this metropolitan city.

September 30, 2018. We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For curriculum that is grounded in truth and meaning; for space to nourish the creative seed in both teachers and students.

Community News

Welcome new residents & staff

We’re excited to have several new people on board as we enter the fall and begin another program year. Tim Holtz, our former Council Treasurer and the former Executive Director of the Richmond Christian Leadership Initiative, is our new director of administration and finance. Sunny Riggs joins us from North Carolina where she lived and worked in proximity to long-time resident and retreat coordinator, Karen Moore. She is our new hospitality coordinator, in charge of our kitchen and meals. David Vinson, who moved out of the community in June, remains with us as non-residential staff, our new facilities manager. And we welcome Aria Kirkland-Harris as a new resident. Aria is from the DC area and will be a Master of Divinity student at Virginia Union’s Samuel D. Proctor School of Theology while living and working at Richmond Hill as our part-time Project Coordinator. The Rev. Sheryl Johnson joined us over the summer and will continue with us through the fall, as our communication specialist, providing expertise in updating our new database and assistance implementing our new communications plan. Please join us in welcoming these people in their new roles in the community. They are each an answer to prayer!

Armstrong Leadership

Ready for College!

The mission of the Armstrong Leadership Program is to challenge, develop, stimulate and grow our student leaders physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. To ensure students acquire skills in the areas of personal development, leadership training, mentoring, cultural exposure and post-graduate preparation in an effort to prepare students for success after high school. The 2018 college shower initiative was very successful again this year. We truly appreciate the contributions of time, energy, resources and commitment provided by the many host to prepare our youth for transitioning into college. Students were showered with lots of items (i.e: laptops, cleaning and school supplies, microwaves, refrigerators, bedding, gift cards, scholarships, advice and so much more). Please know that your efforts to support our students are greatly appreciated and represents the outreach efforts of the greater community. The beautiful pictures and joyous stories are truly amazing; you have made a difference in the lives of these young people as they aspire to make their dreams come true.

As you are aware, the transition to college can be challenging, therefore we encourage you to keep in contact with your student by sending an email or note to check in. The moral support is just as important.

If your ministry, congregation or organization has interest in hosting a shower, please contact Yvette Davis Rajput, Director

at work: 804-783-7903, ext. 13,
or cell 804-314-2622, or: yrajput@richmondhillva.org
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 Tue. 4 p.m.– Sun. 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 Mary Lewis, 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

First Friday Retreats
First Friday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
A day for quiet reflection and spiritual renewal. Structure and guidance will be provided for those who want it as well as the option for one-on-one spiritual direction, or you can simply spend the day in silence—your choice.
Suggested Donation: $20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Mimi Weaver, spiritual director and life coach. She can be reached at www.GraceMoves.com
Contact DeBorah Cannady at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org
Please register in advance. Space is limited.

Listening to the Silence
Second Tuesday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Arrive at Richmond Hill at 8:45 to begin this spiritual experience. Lunch and chapel are included. Bring your Bible and your journal but leave the cell phone in the car.
Suggested Donation: $20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Rita Ricks, spiritual director
Contact DeBorah Cannady at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org
Please register in advance. Space is limited.

New Offerings

Request a Discernment Circle
Need help navigating a life transition? Richmond Hill is pleased to offer another practice to assist you with discerning God’s direction for your life. Discernment Circles, or Clearness Committees as they are called in the Quaker tradition, offer safe space in the company of trusted others for listening deeply to what needs to be heard. Several from our Richmond Hill community are now trained in the process and available upon request to hold sacred space for you. To learn more, speak to one of our co-pastoral directors: Rev. Joel Blunk or Rev. Janie M. Walker at 804-783-7903.
To schedule a circle, contact DeBorah Cannady at 804-783-7903 or dcannady@richmondhillva.org.

Fall Garden Retreats
The garden beckons growers and tillers of the earth to offer your time and talent on first Thursdays in October and November (Oct. 4 & Nov. 1) to help around the grounds of Richmond Hill. Work will be performed from 9-11 a.m. The 11-noon hour will provide an opportunity to enjoy the quiet and contemplative space of Richmond Hill. All are invited to Midday Prayers in the chapel at noon followed by our Thursday Community Lunch in the refectory. Those interested should contact our Retreat Coordinator, Mary Lewis, at retreats@richmondhillva.org. We have space for 3-4 volunteers per month. Call to get your name on the list today!
Space is limited, so please get your name on the list today!
Now Enrolling

Please join us for the first event in our annual Koinonia series of retreats and lectures focused on race and justice. You may sign up by event or for the whole year at a reduced cost.

Koinonia is designed to equip people in three ways: by engaging in transformative, self-reflective work; by teaching dialogue skills for handling tough conversations; and by preparing participants for social justice engagement with the wider community.

Retreats and seminars will include guest presenters, small group discussions, community engagement and time for personal reflection. Topics will include the history and theology of race, recognizing the signs of systemic racism and implicit bias, and Non-Violent Communication.

The weekend retreats are $110 each and the day seminars are $50 each. Tuition for the entire year is $325, a savings of $50.

To register for the September day-retreat or the entire year, call (804) 783-7903 or email retreats@richmondhillva.org.

Paper or pixel?

Would you prefer receiving the Richmond Hill Update and regular announcements electronically? In an effort to be better stewards, we are offering an electronic version of the newsletter. Communicating electronically is the most cost effective and efficient way for us to stay in touch. If you prefer to receive the paper copy of the newsletter via regular mail we are happy to provide that.

To let us know, please call the Richmond Hill office at 804-783-7903 or complete this online form: www.richmondhillva.org/subscribe/
DAILY PRAYERS
Morning 7:00 - 7:15 a.m.
Noon 12:00 - 12:15 p.m.
Evening 6:00 - 6:15 p.m.

COMMUNITY WORSHIP
Every Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
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
First Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Jim Bennett, Leader
Taizé worship is contemplative and meditative in character, using short songs, repeated again and again in a candlelit chapel. The songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the heart. The hope is this reality will gradually penetrate one’s whole being; thus the meditative singing becomes a way of listening to God. Our practice of Taizé includes singing, prayer for Metropolitan Richmond, and a period of silence. Jim Bennett, a skilled musician, leads this time of worship with a variety of guest musicians and instruments.

SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE
Deborah Cannady, Leader
1st Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Those struggling with illness have benefitted from being “soaked in prayer” over periods of time. Prayer ministers are available to pray with those desiring emotional, spiritual, or physical healing. Participants are invited to find a comfortable place, sit, relax, and receive prayer. Participants may also come and go during the service.

GENERATIONAL HEALING SERVICE
5th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Rev. Dr. Paula O. Parker, Leader
Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a service for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God’s healing into your family, including generations that have gone before, as well as generations that will come after you. Participants are encouraged to bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of their ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). However, careful preparation of your personal genogram will help you pray more specifically for your family members.

MEN’S CIRCLE: PRACTICING THE WAY OF COUNCIL
2nd Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Rev. Joel Blunk, Leader
Men of all ages and stages of life are invited to participate in this monthly gathering at Richmond Hill to practice The Way of Council, an ancient spiritual practice of storytelling and deep conversation. The process is simple. Plenty of silence creates spaciousness for meaning—both spoken and unspoken—to be offered and received. We hold the space with intention. The time is closed with a prayer, a group gesture or a few moments more of silence.

Work is Prayer
This past July we held our first ever Brother Lawrence Retreat to help with cleaning needs in and around Richmond Hill. We weren’t sure what to expect, but people came and eagerly got to work and pray. A medieval Carmelite monk, Brother Lawrence, found God in his daily kitchen chores and provided inspiration as the group prayerfully went about dusting, scrubbing, sweeping and polishing.

A reflection written by Nancy Heisey beautifully reminds us that cleaning can connect us with the past even as it cares for the present and prepares for those yet to come.

“Work is prayer.” I have been seeking this understanding for decades, with little achievement, at least as far as I could tell. When I saw the invitation to the Brother Lawrence retreat at Richmond Hill, I signed up immediately. This move was not because I was drawn to the idea, but because I wanted to make a retreat before diving into the busyness of fall—and these dates were open. Having worked my way through college on the cleaning crew, I felt very comfortable with the tasks before us as the retreatants gathered on the first evening. As someone who, during a very difficult life-stage, has come regularly to Richmond Hill, I longed for the rhythm of prayer blended with the commitment to engage the life of the city that the Richmond Hill community represents.

Old buildings with lots of nooks and crannies can collect SO MUCH dust, cobwebs, and grime! At first I worried about how much we had to do and how little time we had to do it. While moldy vents drew my attention, praying while I scrubbed seemed to elude me. Yet as the fifteen of us dived into our tasks—and quickly became a team—I began to sense this community-information was itself a prayer. I was also surprised that the buildings themselves, likely because the Richmond Hill community is so mindful of the histories of its location, began to breathe their stories to me. These centuries-old stories—of prayer by the first indigenous visitors to the hill, of sisters responding peacefully in war’s aftermath, of contemporary commitment to justice and reconciliation—met and shaped my own story. The words of Brother Lawrence wove their tapestry through our days. Richmond Hill was cleaner. We were a prayer—God willing, a prayer that each of us can carry into the months ahead.

Nancy Heisey, Participant
2018 Brother Lawrence Retreat

We’ve decided to host the Brother Lawrence Retreat semi-annually. The next dates are January 8-10 and July 23-25, 2019. Copies of the Brother Lawrence Retreat booklet with quotes and reflections are available in our bookstore, with thanks to Kim Hunziker.
Embracing Our Shadow

**Saturday to Sunday, November 3-4**

There are parts of us that are hard to see and even more difficult to accept, even good things. It’s true for us as individuals and as a collective society. In Richmond, it’s the history of slavery and the legacy of racism that must be faced if we are going to make progress toward healing and becoming whole. Individually, we must own our failures, shortcomings and flaws to avoid projecting pain onto others. At the same time, we must reclaim those qualities of goodness and light that we project onto others as well. It’s about knowing ourselves as human beings — the good, the bad, the ugly — and accepting it all!

Join Mimi Weaver and Joel Blunk for a 24 hour retreat Saturday to Sunday, November 3-4, 4 PM to 4 PM, to consider the wholeness that genuine shadow work can bring individually and to our community. We’ll discuss the concept of the shadow and consider how embracing it can lead us to healing and wholeness.

To register, contact Mary Lewis at retreats@richmondhillva.org

This offering meets continuing education requirements for Richmond Hill adjunct ministers.

Space is limited. The cost is $95.

Connect creatively with your spirit

**Upcoming Retreat Dates:**

- **October 6, 2018**  |  **January 19, 2019**
- **March 16, 2019**  |  **May 18, 2019**

*always held on Saturday, 9 am - 4 pm*

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. Connect with your inner spirit while using your creativity. We look forward to having you with us!
September 2018

Metro Richmond at Prayer

In September:

Pray for Schools & Educational Institutions of 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.

Help the Hill

Richmond Hill participates in Amazon Smile, so whenever you buy from Amazon, you can help support the work of Richmond Hill. Go to smile.amazon.com for details and to sign up.

Thanks for your support!