

UPDATE



For the spirit of the city

2209 EAST GRACE STREET, RICHMOND, VA 23223

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2020

TENDING THE SPIRIT

Called to Community

February marks four years since Kristen and I packed our bags, leaving most of what we had accumulated in 25 years of marriage behind, and moved to Richmond Hill. It was a sense of God's call that led us here. I came to be co-pastoral director, and we acted on a call to live in a residential religious community.

When asked what it's like to live here — the most common question guests want to know — I say it's both incredibly rewarding and difficult. There is no question that the hardest part is living where I work, with a family I didn't choose. My own grown sons, though, remind me often that they didn't choose me, either!

Relationship is at the heart of my theological understanding of the life God desires for us. Even the doctrine of the Trinity provides that example: three in one, each equally important and unique. None alone conveys the whole truth. To love and be loved is what it's all about, and Jesus makes it clear that that is done in community. The great commandment calls us to love self, neighbor, and God — all three. In fact, one without the other isn't possible. The early church used the image of a spoked wheel to convey what loving God is like. God is at the center, and we make up the spokes that radiate out and away. As we draw near to God, we also draw near to one another. Likewise, drawing near to our neighbor naturally moves us closer to God. Perhaps you get the picture.

At Richmond Hill, then, we 12 residents not only worship together, we live together in hopes of modeling the very healing we seek throughout the city.

In a way, the religious life we lead together as residents is simple. But it's not easy. As Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister makes plain, it is one thing to talk about the love of God; it is another thing altogether to practice it. Christian community offers that opportunity, or at least the chance to try. That's what we stumble along attempting here day by day. Success isn't the goal; faithfulness is, and those

living here now are committed to that.

Life in community isn't about perfection, either. It's about growth in ourselves and in the lives of others. You reading this are part of that, too.

I want to thank you for making it possible for us to live in community here. Without you, the twelve of us could not do this. The sisters who originally arrived on this hill in August of 1866 had the support of the Catholic Church. The church made it feasible for them to pray the hours together and open a modest school for girls. You make it possible for us to devote ourselves to the daily prayers for the healing of metropolitan Richmond and to lead unencumbered lives of hospitality. Without you and your generous support, we couldn't do this.

As a result, there are approximately 4000 guests a year who come to Richmond Hill on retreat to be inspired and renewed for ministry out in the world and in this city. Our Micah and Armstrong Leadership programs flourish, impacting the lives of numerous children in our public schools. And programs like Ruah, Koinonia, and now, our Rapha School (teaching contemplative healing) are transforming lives that then make a difference in their own communities. Many of you are living examples of that!

At the heart of it all is a modest residential community of which I am privileged to be a part. It's our responsibility to keep the prayers going every morning, noon, and evening. It's our responsibility to answer the door for guests and treat them — treat you — as Christ herself. It's our responsibility to care for this sacred ground where we live — these buildings, the garden, the labyrinth, the walls. From here, we are able to tend to things — even as the busy world moves around us — and work for change. It — the work, the welcoming, the tending, the living together — changes us, those who live here, too. Maintaining this residential community is a counter-cultural thing that we are doing together.

Recently, I found my son reading *Status Anxiety* by philosopher and author Alain de Botton. The book is about meritocracy and the constant tension or fear of being perceived as "unsuccessful" in material terms by the society.

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*Our commitment is
to find our identity —
not in ourselves or
in the work we do —
but in Christ.*

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Wayne Lewis Mary Lou Rumble

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TENDING THE SPIRIT

Andy has been under some stress himself — I think in part the result of growing up in a home that instilled Christ-like values at odds with the world he now finds himself in. The book's title alone makes me reflect further on life in community.

Christian community is one antidote to status anxiety. In fact, it seeks to do away with status altogether. God's Kingdom is not of this world. It is not laced with the hierarchies that extol some at the expense of others. It is not fraught with distribution problems, scarcity, segregation, war. Instead, it is about life found in and with God. In Christian community, our commitment is to find our identity — not in ourselves or in the work we do — but in Christ. As a lifelong Christian, I've heard those words forever, but they carry a different meaning now, after living at Richmond Hill.

Now I know how radical those words are. And how difficult. I also know how life-enriching community can be. To live in community is to stand against the empires that be by living counterculturally to their values and commitments.

The world needs this alternative — this example — to offer hope, healing, and the possibility of new life in the face of all that threatens us.

Know that 12 of us are hard at work and prayer on your behalf — on God's behalf! — holding space and offering prayers, open to the spirit of unity which binds all things together as one. Thank you for helping create the opportunity for the 12 of us to do what we do. And thank for your part in the overall ministry of Richmond Hill.

Rev. Joel Blunk

Co-Pastoral Director

If you think you may be interested in exploring residential life at Richmond Hill, please contact us at info@richmondhillva.org

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REVIVE RICHMOND

The Very Stones Cry Out

On March 17, Richmond Hill will publicly launch its capital campaign to refurbish its historic monastery and grounds. During our early, quiet phase, generous supporters have already committed \$1.9 million!

As with "all things Richmond Hill", this Capital Campaign began several years ago — first, in prayer and then, in revelation.

In prayer, the Richmond Hill Council asked, "What's required to care for this amazing place?" It commissioned an Historic Structures Report from Glave & Holmes Architecture, which identified needs from preserving crumbling garden walls to restoring sagging porches on the Adams-Taylor house.

But, then, something more profound emerged.

The Council, residents, and staff asked, "How might this Capital Campaign be more than the preservation of buildings and grounds?" They answered, "This is about preparing for the next generation of ministry — preserving our mission of supporting God's healing of metropolitan Richmond; extending the radical hospitality of a diverse residential community; and holding sacred this transformative place overlooking the City."

"This is a place with a purpose."

Inspired by Richmond Hill's past work, its lively spirit today, and its promising future, almost 100 donors have now joined the Campaign.

But, this Campaign is for all of us — with our many different and emerging stories — to journey together closer to God's "beloved community", to sustain this sacred place, and to discover, along the way, Richmond Hill's next generation of ministry to metropolitan Richmond.

Richmond Hill is here for all who seek understanding and meaning in their personal lives. Richmond Hill is here to give healing and hope to an entire City.

Come let us walk gently together — in thoughtful prayer and profound gratitude for all that has come before. Let us walk confidently, arm in arm — into the future, with a rich hope and unrestrained joy.

God is at work!

Listen! You can hear it. At this historic monastery overlooking our City — "the very stones cry out!"

*Don Cowles and Cathy Woodson,
Capital Campaign Co-Chairs*

Pray for the Coming of God's Realm in Metropolitan Richmond.

Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10)

February 2, 2020. We pray for the coming of God's Realm in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of unity and cooperation among all people in all jurisdictions; to earnestly seek the common welfare of this metropolitan city; to express compassion and care for our natural environment.

February 9, 2020. We pray for the coming of God's Realm in Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy economic development, which enhances the Metropolitan community, employs the unemployed, and contributes to the common good.

February 16, 2020. We pray for the coming of God's Realm in Metropolitan Richmond: For redemption of the divisions, prejudices, pettiness, despair, and discrimination of the past.

February 23, 2020. We pray for the coming of God's Realm in Metropolitan Richmond: For the enhancement of our common life through the Holy Spirit, and for the resurrection of metropolitan Richmond as a modern metropolitan city of hope for the world.

February 2020

Pray for Health Care in Metropolitan Richmond.

Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." (Matthew 11:4-5)

March 1, 2020. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For persons living with terminal illnesses and for their families, friends, and communities; for persons working to find cures for diseases.

March 8, 2020. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For all the sick and their caregivers, doctors, nurses, hospice workers, home healthcare workers, and all who minister to the health of others. For clinics, medical personnel, and all institutions that serve persons who are uninsured or underinsured.

March 15, 2020. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For emergency response personnel and all emergency room staff. For hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice programs; and for persons diagnosed with terminal illness.

March 22, 2020. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For a national health care system which promotes and encourages health, wellness, and well being for all people.

March 29, 2020. We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For clinics, medical personnel, and all institutions that serve persons who are uninsured or underinsured.

March 2020

New Beginnings in a New Year

As we reflect on the last few months in 2019, there is much to celebrate. Congratulations to our students who participated as panelists during the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities RVA Table Talk. The discussion focused on education. During the event, panelists shared their views on the impact of poverty, crime and violence. The goal is to inform the community of the challenges that many of our youth face every day. The community stakeholders who were in attendance, left impressed with the way ALP students articulated their views and experiences. During the panel interviews portion of the activity, participants were enlightened on many of the barriers that often impact learning. Great job Leaders! We congratulate ALP team members who were either on stage or behind the scenes during the *Musical Comedy Mystery* at Armstrong High School. The play kept the audience laughing and the suspense was truly entertaining... Kudos to Armstrong's **ACE Program, Richmond Community and Open High Schools**.



ALP students were able to join in the celebration of the unveiling of the Kehinde Wiley's "*Rumors of War*" at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. We believe the statue spoke to our students as it represented a part of them in many ways. It was created in response to the statue of Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart located here in Richmond along with similar statues of high-ranking Confederate Army officers which still stand in the United States despite persistent calls for their removal.

To bring in the holiday season, our students were treated to the Richmond Symphony's *Let it Snow* concert. Attending the concert has become an annual tradition within ALP. This special evening gives the students an experience like no other as they enjoy the amazing sounds from those who are passionate about their gift of music and song. Special thanks to **Roy and Jane Terry** for the wonderful contribution and amazing experience. Also, students, staff, volunteers and mentors enjoyed a holiday gathering at Richmond Hill featuring music, treats and games. All of us enjoyed wrapping special gifts for the younger members of the Fairfield Boys and Girls Club as a part of ALP's service project. ALP students were surprised to receive holiday cards with gift cards to Walmart enclosed. Blessings to all.

Please help us welcome two new interns, **Addan Jones** (Richmond Hill Urban Service Corps) and **Anna Harris** (VCU School of Social Work). We look forward to having you both on the team.

In gratitude, Yvette and Marvin



Ms. Yvette and ALP made the news when she was interviewed by VPM, which you'll find by going to @myVPM on Instagram.

If you are interested in participating in the Armstrong Leadership Program, please contact
Yvette Davis Rajput, Director at work: 804-783-7903, ext. 13,
 or cell 804-314-2622, or yrajput@richmondhillva.org
Marvin Roane, Assistant Director, 804-484-0736,
 or alp@richmondhillva.org

Like Us on Facebook @ArmstrongLeadership

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 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 DeBorah Cannady, 804-783-7903 or dcannady@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 Mary Lewis 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 Mary Lewis at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org
Please register in advance. Space is limited.

GROUPS

CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

Tuesdays, 4:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Olivia Brown, Facilitator

Tuesdays, 7:30 - 8:45 p.m.

Jerry Deans, 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: David Vinson at 804-783-7903 or facilities@richmondhillva.org

DROP-IN GRIEF GROUP

Monthly, 4th Fridays, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Sandy Gramling, Ph.D., Facilitator

Share experiences and obtain support in a flexible group format from others who are experiencing a loss. Discussion and reflection on the impact of loss, coping, meaning-making, etc. follows the brief presentation.

*Preregistration is helpful but not required.
Contact Mary Lewis at 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org to register.*

Connect creatively with your spirit

If you want to awaken your own creativity, join us from 9 am to 3 pm on Saturday, March 21. Bring your thoughts, a project of your own to work on, or try a new medium within the inspiring surroundings of Richmond Hill.



Facilitator: Brenda Giannini. To register, please contact Mary Lewis, at (804) 783-7903 or email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

Suggested donation: \$30 (includes lunch).

Space is limited, so register soon. If you need to cancel please call and let us know so others can come.

COME JOIN US



**March 28 and April 4,
9 am – 4:30 pm**

Of course you know racism is wrong, but are you willing to take real action in ending racism in our community? The Richmond Pledge to End Racism is a community-wide effort, sponsored by First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond, designed to help us match our actions to our beliefs and to address racism in all its forms. It is a personal pledge, but one lived in concert with others committed to eliminate racism and prejudice one person at a time.

The Richmond Pledge to End Racism has created a workshop to give participants confidence in their ability to talk about and confront racism wherever it lives. We wish to help people of faith:

- Recognize and challenge systemic racism;
- Confront racism and bias in their everyday lives;
- Take leadership in ending racism in our community and culture.

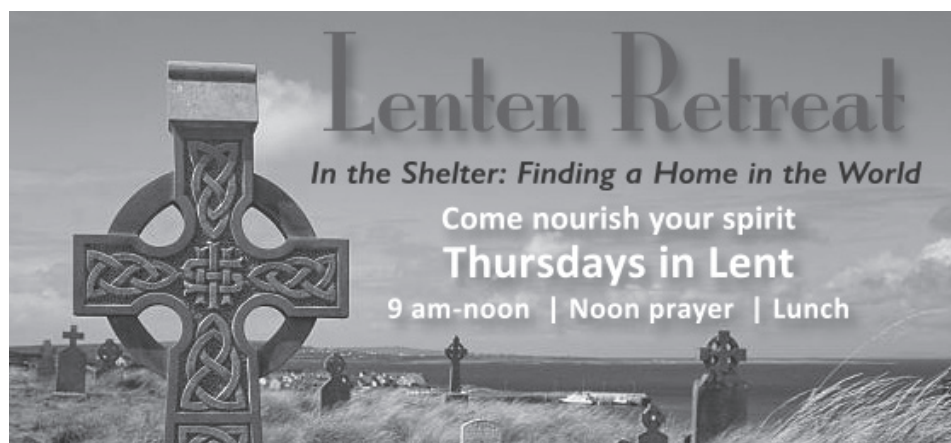
Living the Pledge Workshops are intensive, 2-day training sessions designed to help you learn about inherent, systemic racism and to give you practical strategies and techniques to dismantle it in and around your life. We ask participants to commit to attending both days of the workshop.

Donation: \$55 (some scholarship available)

You must commit to attending both days in their entirety.

Register and more information at
www.richmondpledge.org/workshops
or contact us at
pledgetoendracism@gmail.com

RETREATS



Join Joel Blunk and Leslie Shiel for our Lenten Retreat Series on Thursdays during Lent from 9 to Noon, beginning February 27. The morning will consist of readings from *In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the World*, by poet and theologian Pádraig Ó Tuama, time for journaling, prayer, silence, reflection, and small group discussion. All are welcome and encouraged to stay for Midday Prayers and Community Lunch following.

Facilitators: Joel is Co-Pastoral Director of Richmond Hill. Leslie is a poet and teaches writing at VCU and the Visual Arts Center.

Suggested donation: \$20 per session. Register online, or you may contact Mary Lewis at 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

Brother Lawrence

DAY RETREAT

1st Thursdays

9 am – 4 pm



WORSHIP SERVICES

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 to draw closer 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

1st Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

DeBorah Cannady, Leader

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.

CIRCLES: PRACTICING THE WAY OF COUNCIL

Men's Circle: 2nd Thursdays at 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Women's Circle: 2nd Thursdays at 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Rev. Joel Blunk, Leader

People 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.

A KOINONIA BLACK HISTORY EVENT



UNEARTHING BURIED STORIES

Tuesday, February 25, 7:30-9 pm

**Memory, activism, commemoration,
& the African American experience**

A learn & work opportunity!

Join the Koinonia School of Race & Justice at Richmond Hill for a special Black History Month two-part program focused on African American burial sites. The first event is a dynamic panel that features **Ana Edwards** of the Defenders of Freedom, Justice & Equity, **Brian Palmer** of Friends of the East End Cemetery and **Luranett Lee** from the University of Richmond as they discuss how these sites can help us tell a truer story of Richmond's complicated history and how we can empower our children. Learn about acts of resistance and the successes of long forgotten black communities during and after enslavement.

**Followup volunteer clean-up day at
East End Cemetery on March 14!**

The second event will be a follow up volunteer cemetery restoration day at East End Cemetery on Saturday, **March 14th from 10:00 am until noon.**
<https://eastendcemetery.wordpress.com/statistics/>

Free and open to the public

To register, call (804) 783-7903 or email retreats@richmondhillva.org

== KOINONIA ==
**School of
Race & Justice**
"CALLED TO BE RECONCILERS"



While racial discrimination has defined our nation from the beginning, there have always been individuals willing to confront the injustices, heal the divisions and practice a better way. Are you one of them?

This retreat, held in the heart of what was the Confederate South, will offer safe space for healing dialogue to happen in the pursuit of reconciliation and wholeness. Through storytelling, information sharing, and experiential learning, we'll build community and empower one another to be our best selves in pursuit of a better world.

Join Reverends Robert Dortch and Joel Blunk at Richmond Hill, an historic monastery & residential retreat center, for this intensive 48-hour men's retreat to include:

- A theology of love and redemption
- Real-life examples of strength, courage and resilience
- A tour of Richmond's Historic Trail of Enslaved Africans
- Immersion in Richmond Hill's monastic rhythm of life
- An exploration of implicit bias
- Contemplative practices to promote wholeness, elevate consciousness, and build bridges



Robert Dortch is a father, poet, photographer, executive coach, philanthropic executive, and ordained pastor who is curious about life. He partners

with individuals, organizations and communities on how to dream and believe big and to be strategic and innovative doers.

Joel Blunk, Co-Pastoral Director at Richmond Hill, is a singer-songwriter, storyteller and soul guide. He leads men's rites of passage with Illuman, a national non-profit committed to nurturing better, more authentic men.



Co-sponsored by Oasis Ministries for Spiritual Development and Richmond Hill's Koinonia School of Race and Justice, this retreat is open to men of all ages, races and walks of life. Some financial assistance may be available upon request.

Register today!

Suggested donation: \$225. (CEUs & limited scholarships available)

Register: Online, or call Mary Lewis at 804-783-7903,
or email retreats@richmondhillva.org



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

SAVE THE DATE!

March 17, 7:30 pm

You are invited! Join us for an evening
of prayer, music, and celebration as we launch
Richmond Hill's Capital Campaign:
Preparing for the Next Generation of Ministry

*You are welcome to join our 5:30 worship and
6:30 dinner prior to the celebration.*

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February / March 2020



**Metro
Richmond at
Prayer**

In February: *Pray for the Coming of God's
Kingdom in Metropolitan Richmond.*
...and in March: *Pray for Health Care
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 residents; for the establishment of
God's order in our community.

MONDAYS: Our residents who live in the
City of Richmond, the Mayor, Manager, City
Council, and School Board. Non-profit organiza-
tions and their ministries. All schools: students,
teachers, and staff. Day care centers. All who
suffer from addiction, dependency, and co-de-
pendency. The Council, residents, and staff of
Richmond Hill.

TUESDAYS: Our residents who live in Ha-
nover 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 residents.

THURSDAYS: Our residents who live in Ash-
land, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Peters-
burg, 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 residents who live in Henrico
County, the Supervisors, School Board, and
County Manager. All who work in the manufac-
turing 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 residents 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 perpe-
trators of abuse.

SUNDAYS: Our residents 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 prej-
udice. All places of prayer or worship: churches,
mosques, and synagogues. Universities, col-
leges, 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
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