

UPDATE

For the spirit of the city



2209 E. GRACE STREET, RICHMOND VA 23223

SUMMER 2021

TENDING THE SPIRIT

Giving and Receiving

A few weeks ago, I found myself sitting in my favorite spot in the Richmond Hill garden. I began to think about everything this place has given to me since I first walked through the gate in 2017. The list is long. Richmond Hill is the place where I honed my relationship with God through prayer, where I found a community in Christ, where I was trained as a spiritual director. It is the place where I answered the call to ordained ministry and served communion for the first time. It is the place where I've been inspired to look into my own ancestry and racial history as I am challenged to deepen my commitment to racial justice.

This place has held me through a profound spiritual transformation at a time when my faith has been simultaneously tender and tenacious. Transformation. What a powerful gift to receive.

From that spot in the garden, I thought of how many transformations have taken place here, on this land. So many people have honed their theology, found Christian community, become spiritual directors, discerned their call, and deepened their commitment to racial justice here. So many stories all say the same thing: Richmond Hill has transformed me. Perhaps you have such a story, even a small one—a poignant conversation that left you different than you were before, a moment in the garden where you were sure you felt God's presence, a time when you were put on the prayer list and knew it mattered. This is a place where deep work, hard work, transformative work happens.

I shifted in my chair and looked up as our resident hawk made herself known from the treetops and the darkening clouds beckoned an oncoming storm. I

thought then about the transformation of the place itself over the years—from a high hill in Powhatan territory, to a site of colonization and enslavement, to a place of prayer for the Sisters of the Visitation of Monte Maria. From an old monastery with no heat or air conditioning to an urban retreat center where thousands of people come each year to seek God's healing in our city. From a dream of a few to a vision of many, to a reality that took years to create.

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"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect," Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans. I can't say I know the will of God, but Richmond Hill has indeed taught me something about transformation, renewal, and discernment. What makes this place so special is that it is a place amidst the world but not conformed to it, a place where we all are invited into our own transformation so we can in turn

transform our city.

All this was on my mind as I sat in the garden and considered my gift to Richmond Hill for our Capital Campaign: Preparing for the Next Generation of Ministry. In my role as Associate Pastor for Development, my relationship to this campaign is perhaps more intimate than most. But as I ask people to discern a bold gift, a stretch gift, I take my own discernment for giving seriously. I want to make a gift that reflects the transformation I've received.

We talk a lot about generosity in this campaign, but at this particular moment, I thought about reciprocity. As I work to steward and tend to this place, it in turn tends to me. As I give, so do I receive, tenfold.

Then again, perhaps even reciprocity does not quite capture it. This campaign is an investment into

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METRO RICHMOND AT PRAYER

metroprayrva.org

July 2021

Pray for Governments and Governing Bodies of Metropolitan Richmond.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NIV)

July 4, 2021. We pray for governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Mayor and City Council of Richmond, the City Administrator, and all city employees.

July 11, 2021. We pray for the governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Boards of Supervisors, Councils, Administrators, and government employees of Charles City, Goochland, New Kent, Powhatan, Ashland, Petersburg, and Hopewell.

July 18, 2021. We pray for governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Supervisors of Chesterfield & Hanover Counties, the County Administrators, and all county employees.

July 25, 2021. We pray for governments and governing bodies of Metropolitan Richmond: For the Supervisors of Henrico County, the County Administrator, and all county employees.

August 2021

Pray for the Workplaces and Businesses of Metropolitan Richmond.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil 2:12-13 NRSV)

August 1, 2021. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For safe, respectful work environments, healthy work ethics and attitudes, and sufficient salary and benefits for all workers.

August 8, 2021. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For financial institutions, sustainable and just investment policies, and effective development efforts to benefit the entire community.

August 15, 2021. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For economic development in depressed portions of the city, for the establishment of businesses that will create new employment opportunities.

August 22, 2021. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For owners and managers: for servant leadership, civic responsibility and ethical decision-making.

August 29, 2021. We pray for the workplaces and businesses of Metropolitan Richmond: For full employment opportunities for our young people and heads of families, for the long-term unemployed, and for the under-employed.

TENDING THE SPIRIT...

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the foundation of this place, to strengthen it and ready it and prepare it for whatever the next generation of ministry may bring. As I pondered all that has happened here—in me and in so many—I then began to imagine all that is yet to come. All the people yet to find this place, yet to be changed by it. All the deep, hard, transformative work that remains to be done.

As I sat there immersed in this vision, suddenly the bell tolled, calling us to prayer. I envisioned all the ways in which this place will grow and change and transform and renew to meet the needs of the next generation, even as the steady toll of the bell keeps us grounded in prayer. And that vision filled me with hope.

It is this vision that sealed the deal for me, that inspired me to make a pledge larger than any gift I have given before, multiple times over. A vision for a Richmond Hill ready for what comes next, ready for whoever will walk through these gates and into their own transformation. A vision for Richmond Hill grounded in place, purpose, and prayer, yet prepared for the future. I invite you now to discern a gift alongside me, to invest in this place and this ministry for the next generation.

Rev. Lindsey Franklin

Associate Pastor for Development

EVENTS HELD EARLIER THIS SUMMER



Juneteenth Celebration at Richmond Hill was uplifting and informative -- a great success! We had several dynamic Zoom events. The garden was buzzing with people interested in our archaeological work, participating in a beautiful and moving ritual led by Jabriel Hasan paying homage to people enslaved on this land, and getting help with family history research from experts with the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. A highlight of the weekend were two riveting performances by Margaret Joyner of the Heritage Ensemble Theater debuting the story of Judy, an African American woman enslaved in the Adams Taylor house during the Civil War. The weekend culminated in an African vegan meal prepared by Michael Carter and his family from Carter Farms.



Rev. Joel Blunk has concluded his five-plus years of service to Richmond Hill. At a lovely reception on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, guests greeted Joel and Kristen Saacke Blunk in the garden and enjoyed refreshments in the Refectory. We celebrate Joel and Kristen and give thanks for the many facets of their ministry here.



RUAH XVIII celebrated the successful conclusion of their two-year journey in a hybrid 48-hour closing retreat. Due to the pandemic, they met for many months on Zoom, but were able to gather in person at Richmond Hill for their closing festivities and graduation.

What a rare thrill to have all our past and present pastoral leaders — Lisa, Joel, Janie and Ben — together in the garden, co-conspiring on all that makes Richmond Hill a spiritual home and movement for our City.



Moving in the Right Direction

We are so appreciative of our supporters especially during this challenging school year. Despite many obstacles and logistical challenges, we are happy to report that the program is still moving in the right direction. It wouldn't be possible without you! Special shout out to Pam Smith, Coordinator of Micah Initiative for organizing and partnering with us to provide mentor training for both of our groups. Topics were Asset Language, Social Emotional Learning, Best Practices E-Mentoring and Courageous Conversations. They were meaningful and impactful as well as sparked dynamic conversations within the group. Thanks to Mentor Virginia for preparing us to be the best mentors we can be!

Recently, in preparing for our Mindful Monday session, we stumbled upon Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Bruce Perry's new book "What Happened to You?" The book explores how what happens to us in early childhood influences the people we become. Many of our students experience adversity in childhood that has lasting impact on their physical and emotional health. ALP is committed to learning more and providing interventions to support youth who are struggling with the effects of trauma. As for our youth leaders, the annual student presentations will take place on May 5th via Zoom. Our students worked to develop their group presentations on topics of Self-Care, Time Management and Mindfulness. They worked really hard to collect information, organize assignments and hold planning meetings.

The Closing Ceremony was held Saturday, June 5th at First Presbyterian Church. We celebrated our students and bid farewell to our Seniors. Students received certificates, graduation medals, scholarships, gift cards and much more! Also, we announced the 2021 recipient of the Rev. Janie Walker Spirit Leadership Award for outstanding performance, exemplifying leadership and demonstrating a desire to uplift fellow team members. Additionally, recipients of the College Showers were announced. The showers are graciously hosted by churches, corporations, and organizations and are quintessential in providing students with dorm room essentials and moral support.

Lastly, we would like to recognize and sadly say farewell to our VCU Social Work Intern, Anna Harris. Anna was a great asset to the program, demonstrating her passion and love for our students with case management, facilitating workshops, administrative services and planning activities. Also, we would like to recognize Lindsey Hershner, MSW for taking time out of her busy schedule to provide guidance and field supervision to Anna during her internship with us. Anna graduates with a Bachelor of Social Work degree. She plans to pursue a Master of Social Work degree in the fall. We wish Anna much success in her future endeavors.

*In gratitude,
Yvette and Marvin*

If you are interested in participating in the Armstrong Leadership Program, please contact

Yvette Davis Rajput, Director at work: 804-783-7903, ext. 113, 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

Where is God calling you next?

Are you being called to serve in the City?



Pray, serve, discern, and live intentionally in the heart of the city.

The Richmond Hill Urban Service Corps is a one-to-two year commitment to live and serve with an intentional Christian community dedicated to the healing of metropolitan Richmond.

Opportunities to Serve:

- Community organizing
- Social media outreach
- Church mobilization
- Richmond Public Schools

Beginning in August, four servant-leaders can join in this mission.

Now accepting Applications

To inquire or apply, please contact Rev. Lisa Johnson at (804) 783-7903 or ljohnson@richmondhillva.org

Welcome back, Victoria!

We are excited to announce the newest addition to our Richmond Hill Family. **Victoria Bethel** returns to the community as our Associate Pastor for Hospitality. Victoria fills the position of Group Retreat Host, while taking on some pastoral duties. That allows her to use her gifts and to share experiences gained since her previous time at Richmond Hill. Please be sure to welcome her back to the community when you see her!

Oblate program is taking shape

The *Companions of Richmond Hill Oblate Program* is being designed for those eager to foster a closer relationship with God in concert with the Richmond Hill Community. Launching in January, the Companions of Richmond Hill program offers a formal, reciprocal relationship for those living outside the residential community to stay connected and involved in the mission of Richmond Hill.

Participants are invited to pray alongside Richmond Hill and covenant to live the rule and mission of Richmond Hill where they are. Prayer includes setting aside time daily to pray for oneself, the Richmond Hill Community, and the world. A commitment to the rule and mission of Richmond Hill involves practicing hospitality toward others and working for the healing of racial wounds in one's local context.

The Oblate Program elements include:

- Participate in an initiatory Companion commissioning ceremony at Richmond Hill
- Offer morning and evening prayers daily, incorporating prayers for metropolitan Richmond
- Treat your family life and daily work as your main Christian ministry
- Practice hospitality in your own context
- Work for racial reconciliation where you are
- Practice lectio divina as part of your daily routine
- Meet regularly with a spiritual director
- Create space for silence in your life
- Be a contributing member/participant of a local faith community
- Treat the more-than-human world with care and reverence
- Serve others with consistent patience and compassion
- Study the Rule daily (Richmond Hill's rule and commentaries on the Rule of Benedict)
- Visit Richmond Hill on a regular basis for prayer, worship, personal or group retreat

Watch this fall for more news on the *Companions of Richmond Hill*, slated to begin in January 2022.

***Richmond Hill is closed during July & August.
We eagerly look forward to being with you in September!***

While painting, flooring and interior renovation are underway, we are not booking individual or group retreats or meetings. Thank you for your understanding and your support.



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Summer 2021

Metro Richmond at Prayer



metroprayerva.org

In July: *Pray for Governments and
Governing Bodies of Metropolitan
Richmond.*

...and in August: *Pray for the
Workplaces and Businesses 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 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 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 residents 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 residents.

THURSDAYS: Our residents 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 residents 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 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 perpetrators 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 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.*

