

# UPDATE

For the spirit of the city



2209 E. GRACE STREET, RICHMOND VA 23223 | SPRING 2022

## TENDING THE SPIRIT

### *Spring Forth!*

**E**zekiel 34:26 says, “And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.”

As we approach Spring, we welcome you to the newness this season brings. We are grateful for the rain, for the flowers, the blooming of new life that it brings, the warmth, multiple colors, and breaths of fresh air. We thank God that life comes out of hibernation and our hearts open up to new possibilities. We are thankful that God continues to make “this hill” a blessing and that He sends down showers upon it season after season so that we may continue to be showers of blessings to Metropolitan Richmond and beyond!

We thank God for keeping us through ever-changing seasons over the last two years. We have had to press pause as we navigated a global pandemic, undertaken renovations, and completed our Capital Campaign. We’ve said so long to a Co-Pastoral Director, Rev. Joel Blunk, blessed our Individual Retreat Coordinator, Rev. DeBorah Cannady, into the next leg of her journey, and thanked our Interim Co-Pastoral Director, Rev. Dr. Mark Cooper for his commitment to ministry as we waited for God to call our new Co-Pastoral Director, Rev. Katie Heishman and her family to service here.

God has remained faithful through all these

movements and the uncertainty we’ve experienced. So, we praise God that this continues to be sacred ground where daily prayer, a prophetic presence, transformational ministry, and healing of Metropolitan Richmond are our constant focus. We continue our research and our pursuit of reparations and racial reconciliation through our resident historian, Pam Smith as she uncovers the rich history of this land.

It is our deep desire to be a beloved community where an inclusive populace is welcomed, radical hospitality is offered, spiritual development is exemplified and preparation for the next generation is continuously unfolding.

I pray as we move into this Spring, that we will remember the Isaiah 43:18-19 passage of scripture that reminds us that God is doing something new, and it will spring forth! We give God praise for all that God is doing in and through this amazing place.

May we broaden our “beloved community” with under-represented populations being welcomed as a part of our community. May we continue to be a prophetic presence through our residents, our staff, and volunteer community modeling reconciliation and healing as we offer transformational ministry to this metropolitan region. In Ezekiel 34:29a the Lord promises, “I will make the land famous for its beauty and productivity.” May we be a place of beauty, productive in the works that have been assigned to our hands, and a sweet smiling fragrance in the nostrils of God!

— Rev. Dr. Lisa Johnson, Co-Pastoral Director

*May we be a place  
of beauty, productive  
in the works that have  
been assigned to our  
hands...*

## Richmond Hill Council Members

### President

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Rev. Janet Legro

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Rev. Katie Heishman

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Katie Johnson

Lorae Ponder

Yvette Rajput

Vickie Seymour

Pam Smith

John L. Taylor, III

Margaret Woody

## Community & Staff

### Co-Pastoral Directors

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### Associate Pastor for Development

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#### Co-Gardeners

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Marvin Roane

[alp@richmondhillva.org](mailto:alp@richmondhillva.org)

### Micah Association &

#### Resident Historian

Pam Smith

[psmith@richmondhillva.org](mailto:psmith@richmondhillva.org)

#### Musician

Jim Bennett

#### Residents

Tim Heishman Mary Lou Rumble

## REFLECTING ON CALL

# Pockets of Pebbles

The first day I moved into my office at Richmond Hill I was unboxing a moving box that contained items for my office, but also happened to have some personal items for our apartment. One of them was a journal and as I thumbed through it I realized it contained some entries from April 2021. I found an entry where I was journaling about feeling a call away from my current call as a congregational minister and toward something else. I didn't know exactly what that something else might look like, but I had journaled some things that make me feel alive and which I felt called to pursue more persistently and deeply. Things like...preaching...intentional community...environmental care...racial justice...radical discipleship...prayer and spirituality. Little did I know in April 2021 God was already moving in my life to help make a way for me to join the meaningful, collaborative, healing ministry of Richmond Hill as a co-pastoral director.



This is one of the reasons that I find journaling a particularly helpful spiritual practice for a mindfulness of the long, winding road of God's faithfulness in our lives. When I wrote that journal entry in 2021, I hadn't yet heard of Richmond Hill. I had only imagined and hoped what God had in store for me and our family. I learned of Richmond Hill through another clergywoman's post on Facebook about the job opening. Did you know God was at work on Facebook!? I hadn't quite imagined God helping me to make such a meaningful connection and life change by checking on the "Young Clergywoman International" Facebook page.

I believe deeply that God uses each one of us for moments of connection and impact like this. We can be like a pebble dropped into a pond with ripples that flow out...and out...and out. After I was hired as co-pastoral director, I thanked that clergywoman for amplifying the Richmond Hill job posting, but sometimes our ripples don't always come back to us in that way. Often they go out and we don't learn the impact for years and years or ever. I know the Richmond Hill community has been an impactful, pebble-dropping space for decades. Blessing and connecting thousands and thousands of people for the healing of metropolitan Richmond.

As we look into a new year, what meaningful moments of impact await us? We can't know for sure, but we do know we are called to walk faithfully by dropping little pebbles and stones that bless, challenge, love, restore, and heal along the way. May we load up our pockets with pebbles this new year. Where the ripples will go only God knows.

*Rev. Katie Heishman, Co-Pastoral Director*

metroprayrva.org

## March 2022

## 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 NRSV)*

**March 6, 2022.** 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 13, 2022.** 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 20, 2022.** 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 27, 2022.** We pray for health care in Metropolitan Richmond: For clinics, medical personnel, and all institutions that serve persons who are uninsured or underinsured. For a national health care system that promotes and encourages health, wellness, and well being for all people.

## April 2022

## Pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond.

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight. (Hebrews 13:20-21 NRSV)*

**April 3, 2022.** We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of love, cooperation, peace, community, and commitment to all people in God's name.

**April 10, 2022.** We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: To remove any spirit of contentiousness, prejudice, greed, jealousy, or enjoyment of others' troubles; for a spirit of humility, respecting and appreciating the gifts and contributions of all.

**April 17, 2022 – Easter.** We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of hope, of possibility, of eternal life, and of commitment to the redeeming power of God who brings new life out of death to people and communities.

**April 24, 2022.** We pray for the Spirit of the Resurrection in Metropolitan Richmond: For a spirit of justice, righteousness, equality, and mutual benefit.

*"Therefore, thus says the Lord God, See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation..."*

— Isaiah 28:16 (NRSV)

**L**ate last year, when we crossed the threshold of the \$2.75 million capital campaign, we collectively breathed a sigh of relief and gratitude.

The faith of the Richmond Hill community, frankly, is astounding — you believe in the next generation of ministry here at Richmond Hill. The success of this campaign is a testament to that faith.

The campaign — an investment into the physical place of Richmond Hill — focused on "Preparing for the Next Generation of Ministry." Together, we've built a strong foundation for the future of this place and ministry.

As our Capital Campaign construction finally winds its way towards completion, we now are able to build upon that foundation laid by this campaign and this community.

It is now time to invest in the people and programs that make this place thrive, to ensure that the holy grounds of Richmond Hill support a community rich in prayer, primed for hospitality, committed to racial reconciliation, and alive to the spiritual development of all who come through our doors.

As such, our development efforts this year will focus on sustaining and growing our Annual Fund — supporting the people and programs of Richmond Hill. Our operating budget sustains the work of residents, staff, and countless volunteers who together create programs that drive our mission of seeking God's healing of our metropolitan city.

On a personal note, I am looking forward to imagining where we can go together as a community now that the campaign is behind us, now that we stand on its firm foundation. I can't wait to see where God leads us.

You all have helped lay the foundation— we thank God for you, and trust that God now will build us up, in love, as we live into the next generation of ministry here at Richmond Hill.

*Rev. Lindsey Franklin,  
Associate Pastor for Development*



To register for these First Friday retreats  
please contact Victoria Bethel, at (804) 783-7903, ext.135  
or email: [retreats@richmondhillva.org](mailto:retreats@richmondhillva.org)  
Facilitator: Rev. Victoria Bethel. Suggested donation: \$40



To register for the Art & Spirituality Open Studio  
please contact Victoria Bethel, at (804) 783-7903, ext.135  
or email: [retreats@richmondhillva.org](mailto:retreats@richmondhillva.org)  
Facilitator: Brenda Giannini. Suggested donation: \$40



*Please join the Richmond Hill Co-Pastoral team for an in-depth look at the importance of creating a space for rest!*

## Offered each Friday, 9:30 -11:30 am | March 4 – April 14, 2022 in person at Richmond Hill

We will use as a foundational text, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, by Marva Dawn. This 7-week retreat and sharing from this book will be dedicated to people who need Sabbath— those who are the busiest and need to work from a cohesive, unfragmented self. This retreat has been designed for “those who want to be God’s instruments, enabled and empowered by the Spirit to be world changers and Sabbath healers” (Dawn 1989).

You’re welcome to join us for any or all of this 7-week journey into Sabbath rest!

Facilitators: Rev. Dr. Lisa Johnson and Rev. Katie Heishman

Cost: \$20 per session

[www.richmondhillva.org/rest](http://www.richmondhillva.org/rest) to register, or contact Victoria Bethel, at (804) 783-7903, ext.135

U P C O M I N G !

KOINONIA

## School of Race & Social Justice

**K**oinonia is exploring efforts in the U.S to suppress the truth of our nation's past and present wrongs, counter efforts to face them with courage and honesty, and join the national campaign to create a culture of repair. Come explore how you are being called to act.

### March 18 | Eviction & Displacement in Metro Richmond

Richmond has one of the highest eviction rates in the nation. The issues that have led to the high numbers include a mixed real estate market, meaning a hot market in some areas but not others; low minimum wage; lack of laws that support tenants; low investment in affordable housing; and the low cost for landlords filing for an eviction in Virginia. While other states may have one of these issues, the combination of all of these factors has led to Richmond reaching its current state.

### April 22 | Environmental Justice, Food Insecurity & Health in Low-Income Communities

Environmental Justice has been a topic of concern for decades in the United States. Environmental justice is the equal treatment of all communities, regardless of race, gender, income, class, etc., when it comes to environmental decisions. For example, the placement of a landfill should not be determined by the race or income of the people who live in that area. Unfortunately, this is not always upheld, and many hazardous facilities are placed in "lower class" areas. As a result, many impoverished communities suffer the burdens of environmental injustice.

**Friday evenings, 7-8:30 pm. Offered on Zoom —**

[www.richmondhillva.org/koinonia](http://www.richmondhillva.org/koinonia) to register, or call Pam Smith, at (804) 783-7903, ext.130

*You are invited to the introduction & launch of our new Oblate program*



COMPANIONS OF RICHMOND HILL

**Saturday, March 26, 2022 10 am - noon | in person at Richmond Hill**

*Stay for Noon prayers | Lunch to follow*

### What does it mean to be an Oblate of Richmond Hill?

Come and explore what you can do to participate in this unique opportunity to join us in living into the heart, work, and mission of the healing and transformation of our own lives and of metropolitan Richmond.

[www.richmondhillva.org/oblate](http://www.richmondhillva.org/oblate) to register,  
or call Richard Rumble, at (804) 783-7903, ext.124

JOIN US

### CENTERING PRAYER GROUP

**1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

Patricia Garrity, Jim Thorsen, Tish Watson,  
Facilitators

**C**entering Prayer is a form of contemplative prayer where we deepen our relationship with God through inner quiet and stillness.



Whether you are new to the practice or have been centering for years, you are welcome! Following the 20 minutes of centering prayer, there is an interactive group discussion on a spiritual topic, song, or pertinent literature. We close our time together with a short period of intercessory prayer.

Please consider joining us on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 7:30-8:30 p.m. The Zoom link for those unable to attend in person is available on the website calendar.

**Next meeting dates are March 1, March 15, April 5 and April 19.**

Contact: Richard Rumble at 804-783-7903, ext.124 or [rrumble@richmondhillva.org](mailto:rrumble@richmondhillva.org)

## We are open for retreats!

**Schedule your group or a personal retreat today**

at [retreats@richmondhillva.org](mailto:retreats@richmondhillva.org)  
or [RichmondHillVa.org/retreats](http://RichmondHillVa.org/retreats)



Men of all ages and stages of life are invited to participate in this monthly gathering on Zoom to practice The Way of Council.

For details and a Zoom link, contact:  
Richard Rumble at 804-783-7903, ext.124 or  
[rrumble@richmondhillva.org](mailto:rrumble@richmondhillva.org)



## New Mentor Training

March 12, 2022, 9am-Noon at Richmond Hill

Sign up: [richmondhillva.org/mentor](http://richmondhillva.org/mentor)

## Mission and Mentors

Special thanks to First Presbyterian Church for allowing us to be the recipients of their annual “Music for Mission” benefit concert featuring the critically acclaimed professional group composed of some of the finest singers in the classical music world, The American Spiritual Ensemble. The mission of American Spiritual Ensemble is to preserve and continue the tradition of storytelling through the performance and preservation of the American negro spiritual. Their gift of music helped us reach our goal of raising funds for College and Culture Tour planned in the spring. Additionally, we are especially grateful for the wonderful hygiene bags (detergent, toothpaste, deodorant, body wash, and much more) that congregation provides for the students on a regular basis.

On another note, ALP is currently seeking adult mentors to match with our newest cohort of student leaders. If you have a desire to share your gifts, talents, abilities, wisdom or life experiences with one of our student leaders, mentoring is the perfect opportunity for you to make a difference in the lives of our youth. Data reveals that a relationship between youth and a caring adult supports positive personal development, improves self-esteem and promotes academic achievement. Also, the mentoring relationship can assist in reducing drug use, aggression, depressive symptoms, and delinquent acts in today’s youth. Contact us today to learn more.

*Peace & Blessings, Yvette Davis Rajput and Marvin Roane*

*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](mailto:yrajput@richmondhillva.org)*

*Marvin Roane, Assistant Director, 804-484-0736, or [alp@richmondhillva.org](mailto:alp@richmondhillva.org)*

*Like Us on Facebook @ArmstrongLeadership*

## Micah Lessons from a Pandemic

What happens when a pandemic alters the course of life for everyone? We adapt. I have the pleasure of coordinating the Micah Initiative and watching how Micah volunteers have stayed nimble during difficult times. Here is what I’ve learned from our devoted volunteers from diverse faith communities.



No classroom volunteers right now? No problem. Good Shepherd Church, for example, pivoted early in the pandemic to become a daycare center with online school for families without other options. And a recently retired teacher, having a personal connection with many families at her school, started her own Facebook reading program serving a growing number of students. Micah also began a new partnership with Coming to the Table ([www.comingtothetablerv.org](http://www.comingtothetablerv.org)), where volunteers are helping with gardening and other tasks to fulfill a request from Cary Elementary and they will soon become reading buddies as well.

Isolation can be deadening. Throughout the pandemic, our regular Micah professional development workshops have been a source of energy, fellowship, education, fun, and hope.

During this time of racial reckoning in our country, these meetings have also been an honest and safe space for volunteers to learn and grow in their understanding of systemic injustices. For instance, we partnered with the Zinn Education Project and held an enriching two-part workshop on the importance of teaching students the full American history because all children need to see themselves as part of the American story.

Finally, at our last Micah workshop, retired reading specialist Christy Somerville ended her presentation on reading fundamentals with a picture of her adorable 19 month-old grandson Leo engaging with a big book. This sparked a lively conversation about the importance of cultivating a love of reading early – sooner than first grade. Micah is now exploring what we might be able to contribute in this area, with our youngest children. These are exciting times with new frontiers. Soon we’ll be back in the classrooms, embracing all that we have learned during a dreadful pandemic that turned out to be an energizing force for good.

*Pam Smith, Micah Coordinator*

## Students Explore Former Enslavement at Richmond Hill

In December 2021, David Givens, Director of Archaeology at the Jamestown Rediscovery Project, and Richmond Hill archaeologist Tim Roberts used ground penetrating radar (GPR) to explore the area in and around a building recorded as having been occupied by enslaved families who lived and worked on the property.

According to Givens, GPR can non-invasively “see” into the ground and help evaluate buried resources, and plan future excavations. Often the results can be used to maximize the efficiency of the archaeology while maximizing the results. “For example, preliminary results suggest that the standing building on the property was more extensive in its original form and that portions of it are intact below the surface.” In addition, there is a hollow space of at least a foot just beneath the floor surface that may have been used to store vegetables and hide treasured items. With these enticing data, the team is excited to continue the work and ask more questions of both the GPR and the archaeology!”

High school students from Richmond Hill’s Armstrong Leadership Program (ALP) were able to join the team conducting the GPR survey. “We had a fantastic time engaging with future archaeologists and historic preservationists (hopefully!) about history, archaeology, and how the radar works in the field,” Givens said. Alana Hamilton (freshman) and Jaheim Peoples (senior) operated the GPR, which is similar to pushing a manual lawn mower. The GPR’s control unit displays the radar scans with images that look like layers of sand.

“I think it’s cool that you can look at stuff while it’s underground,” said Alana. “This is a very useful and valuable piece of equipment. I think it will get even better with technology.” Alana hopes to find a cellar with old artifacts, “something that no one has touched since that time.” Jaheim, who is planning to become an electrical engineer, made a startling discovery inside the house -- a window may have once been a doorway or some other feature!

ALP intern Alexandra Keniston experienced a complex mix of feelings as she quietly immersed herself in the dwelling earlier in the day. “It just feels like it’s not meant to be here. It belongs to the past, but the ramifications of the ideology behind it are still affecting African Americans to this day,” she said. “I mean the negative consequences of enslavement... we see it in the trauma, in the effects of slavery – the degradation of human beings, the

lack of economic opportunity, and also in the continued perseverance of the idea that Black people are less than. That’s all from an outdated idea that comes from this [time].”

For Alexandra, what to do with the deteriorating structure is complicated. “You don’t want to destroy it because then people may forget about it – but you also don’t want to idealize the ideology behind it.” She wonders if, similar to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, DC., it could be used as a backdrop to tell the history of enslaved people in Richmond by showing how the ideology that created and sustained the institution was wrong.

“It was a phenomenal feeling sharing in the excitement of uncovering a portion of Rich-

mond’s past through the eyes of our student leaders as they learned of the lives, challenges and perseverance of the Africans who were enslaved in America,” said ALP Assistant director Marvin Roane. “We believe that participation in projects that unearth history provides a broader knowledge of untold stories which can create a stronger connection to the ancestors.” Roane said this type of experiential learning is desperately needed in today’s education because it makes history “more inviting and real.” “It encourages students to get involved in present day activism while introducing them to career fields that are often not celebrated. Inspiration leads to motivation, motivation adds value and value helps the student to reach for their fullest potential.”

Also in attendance at the exploration were co-pastoral director Rev. Lisa Johnson, interim co-pastoral director Rev. Mark Cooper, RUAH director Elnora Allen, Rev. Ben Hadley-Goggins and project director Pam Smith.

“We are so grateful to our friends at Jamestown Rediscovery for sharing their expertise and specialized equipment with Richmond Hill,” said Smith, resident historian. “At Richmond Hill, we are working to expose young African Americans to historic preservation as a possible career path because many students are unaware of this exciting truth-telling possibility.”

The next step following Ground Penetrating Radar will be to ‘ground truth’ the possible archaeological features identified by the GPR by conducting additional excavation, explained archaeologist Tim Roberts. “We’ll dig for the truth that we now know is there.”

— Pam Smith, Resident Historian





2209 East Grace Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23223  
804-783-7903 | richmondhillva.org

**We are open for retreats!**  
**Schedule your group or personal retreat today**  
**at [retreats@richmondhillva.org](mailto:retreats@richmondhillva.org)**  
**or [RichmondHillVa.org/retreats](http://RichmondHillVa.org/retreats)**

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## Spring 2022

Metro Richmond  
at Prayer

[metroprayrva.org](http://metroprayrva.org)



**In March:** *Pray for Health Care in  
Metropolitan Richmond.*

**...and in April:** *Pray for the Spirit of the  
Resurrection 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 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.*

