

UPDATE

For the spirit of the city



2209 EAST GRACE STREET RICHMOND, VA 23223

DECEMBER 2016

TENDING THE SPIRIT

What a Gift!

"For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." — Luke 1:37-38 NRSV

"For nothing will be impossible with God." These words still bring perplexity and pondering to a halt. They still inspire affirmation and resolve in the hearts of those who truly hear them. What a gift!

A prevailing confidence that God is bringing about new life in the face of the unexpected, the challenging, or the chaotic, still serves to ground the vulnerable among us and create resilience in us. Responding in such a faith-filled manner to the unexpected things life brings our way points to what may better be described as a holy resilience. It speaks to acting from a place greater than our human abilities, and a knowledge that God is involved in our lives. Holy Resilience — a gift that will not fit or be found under our Christmas trees.

To visit once again the story of Mary's surprise encounter with Gabriel offers us a window through which to look, not only into Mary's soul, but also into what holy resilience might look like. The story tells us where Mary lived, her innocent and vulnerable state of being, and who she was engaged to marry. It lets us know also that she was confused, perplexed and fearful — traumatized.

Another prevailing factor which the story doesn't tell us is the climate of the times in which Mary lived. She lived in a time when Jews held distrust and hatred for the Roman Empire, which ruled over Palestine. King Herod, ruler of the region which included her hometown, Nazareth of Galilee, was a very powerful and cruel man. Not only did he call for destruction of human lives, but he also profaned religious practices and places of worship.

It was a time when the Roman government maintained strict control over 1st century Palestine through a pseudo

religious-political system of freedom for all people — a system which ensured that all religious beliefs, philosophical teachings, and government systems were compatible and subject to the Roman system. The system of Jewish religion and government was divided between two parties: the Pharisees — which strictly conformed to Jewish law, holding

fast to the traditions of Israel's patriarchs; and the Sadducees — the wealthy and conservative leaders who rejected the traditions of Israel's patriarchs in favor of political and religious cooperation with the Romans.

In the midst of such political, cultural and religious upheaval, this young woman was met with the message of "You who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." How strange and unexpected the experience must have been for her under such circumstances. Like any of us, when we are met with something new and strange, she became perplexed and fearful. We were created to respond to anything perceived as harmful or a threatening to

our survival in this way. When the patterns of life we're used to get disrupted, our defense mechanisms are expected to kick in.

Mary's inner alarm system was normal and healthy, and her initial response speaks to our human condition. The danger for any of us, though, would be to get stuck in the fear and perplexity. For, fear can take on a life of its own and control us in ways and at times we least expect. When we respond to situations out of fear rather than faith, we tend to make rather poor decisions; not to mention be viewed as pretty poor examples of followers of Christ.

In our own time, when our nation's political, cultural and religious climate has the potential of being as hostile and threatening as that of 1st Century Palestine, we must seek the way of peace that can still be found in receiving the word of inspiration given over two millennia ago — "For nothing will be impossible with God."

In further consideration of Mary's response to Gabriel's

Continues on page 2

*"Let it
be to me
according to
your word"*

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TENDING THE SPIRIT

announcement and explanation, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said," we see resilience at work — holy resilience. Here is a young and vulnerable woman faced with possible rejection from her family and her husband to be, as well as possible religious and political repercussions. Yet, she was able to respond with a resolve that came with the assurance of knowing that God was with her and God had gifted her with what she needed to live out that resolve.

Mary affirms the foundational truth that undergirds any resolve to accept what is before us and the inspiration to move forward in a faith-filled manner: This kind of resilience is not a gift we give ourselves. It is a divine gift that is given us so that when all is said and done, when all possibilities have been explored, when consideration has been given to who we really are, we can still say with confidence "Here I am, a servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to your word."

Sometimes it takes tumultuous times or great upheaval in our souls to come to such a place of deep resolve; but come to it we must. So too must we move forth in a faith-filled manner. For, "to practice resilience is to bend with the assaults of life rather than rigidly holding on until they break us."

In spite of our human condition, our place of residence, our relationships, or our national political climate, we must resolve to live from a Christ-centered place each and every day. The resilience we need to move forward in our resolve can only be gained through the power and inspiration of a God-inspired word.

May this Christmas season bring each of us the gift of a God-inspired Word; inspiring us to live a life of Holy Resilience.

O God, to your glory, "Let it be with us according to your word."

Merry Christmas to all!

Rev. Janie M. Walker
Co-Pastoral Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Departments			
1-2	Tending the Spirit, Revive Richmond	6	Opportunities for Retreat,
3	Richmond at Prayer, Community News	7	Celebrate the Spirit, In Direction
4-5	Retreats, Schools, Groups, and Classes	8	Prayer Cycle

REVIVE RICHMOND

Start Close In

I was recently invited to speak at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on reconciliation as part of their Sunday morning Adult Spiritual Formation series. Reconciliation is at the heart of our work at Richmond Hill and continues to be a great need in the healing of our metro area. Our racial history here and current indicators of continued racism nationwide make our efforts all the more urgent.

But reconciliation of all kinds is needed today. How we treat one another regardless of skin color, political stand, religion, or any other orientation matters. Divisiveness threatens the existence of the entire planet. According to the Apostle Paul, Jesus came to change all that and we're meant to work for it too (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

Roberta Bondi, in her little book, *To Pray and To Love*, offers a wonderful image of reconciliation from the early church. Recalling a time when one of the early monastic communities forgot the relationship between loving God and neighbor, Bondi tells the story of Dorotheos of Gaza who drew a wide circle on the ground. He told his brothers the circle represented the world. Next he drew a smaller circle in the center representing God. As he drew spokes from the outside circle to the center, he explained that each line represented their individual lives. They were, collectively, intending to move nearer to God at the center. But to get there, he pointed out, they were also moving nearer to one another as their individual lines converged toward the center. The journey to God was a journey of reconciliation with one another. And vice versa. He emphasized to his friends that they needed to pay attention to the way in which they treated one another if they hoped to be reconciled in every way.

We're invited, too, to see our lives in those concentric circles, our own sense of closeness to God being wrapped up in our closeness to one another. As we learn to care for and embrace each other, even amidst our differences and diversity, we are brought closer to the One who created us each uniquely.

As we prepare to celebrate again God's incarnation, let us remember to love in incarnational ways: a kind word, an offer of forgiveness, a listening ear, extending a helping hand. To begin the work of reconciliation we need only start close in with someone nearby. God is a reconciling God and asks us to do the same.

Rev. Joel Blunk
Co-Pastoral Director

Pray for the Families of Metropolitan Richmond.

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

December 2016

December 4, 2016. We pray for the families of Metropolitan Richmond: For single-parent families, adoptive families, foster families, and for households that are communities of friends; for elderly persons living in their own homes, in retirement communities, and in nursing institutions.

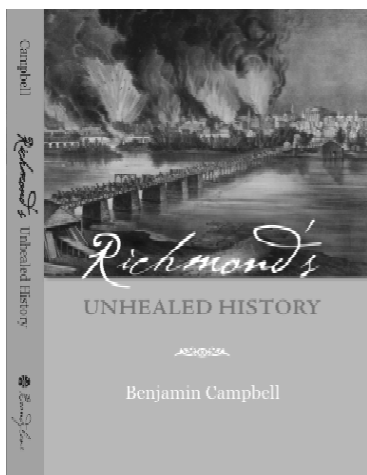
December 11, 2016. We pray for the families of Metropolitan Richmond: For persons who are lonely or have no family; for persons who are estranged from their families; for persons who are grieving the loss of a loved one; and for all who need to feel the love of God.

December 18, 2016. We pray for the families of Metropolitan Richmond: For the care and protection of infants, children, and youth; and for the intimate knowledge that each one is a beloved child of God.

December 25, 2016. We pray for the families of Metropolitan Richmond: For an end to child abuse; for healthy relationships between children and their caregivers; for families going through divorce; and for all in the midst of life transitions.

AVAILABLE NOW from the RICHMOND HILL BOOKSTORE

Richmond's Unhealed History



by Benjamin Campbell

Ben's book is available in a Kindle version for \$5.99 at Amazon.com

\$15.95 plus tax at Richmond Hill
or
\$18.50 postpaid, tax included,
by mail from Richmond Hill.

Order by
telephone (783-7903)
or on the web
richmondhillva.org

Your order from the Richmond Hill Bookstore supports Richmond Hill.

Ready, Set...Go!

On Friday, November 11, 2016, ALP celebrated with mentors, parents, and volunteers at our **Annual Autumn Social Gathering**. The event was filled with fun and fellowship, held at **East District Family Resource Center** where we had a fresh food tasting station, community canvas art project, dance contest, campaign cool pledge, board games, mindful moment demonstrations, line dancing and opportunities to meet and greet. A special thank you to Brandi Daniels for hosting us. Also, we were happy to have in attendance, Tamara Mines, Principal of Armstrong High School, and Cezar Carvalhaes, Armstrong High School Communities in Schools site director. What was especially exciting was the **Mindful Moment**, led by Marvin, a period in which everyone pauses to practice relaxation and mindfulness. Mindfulness is a new initiative that will assist students in the areas of stress reduction, attention, focus and managing self from the effects of trauma. Additionally the ALP directors completed a three-day workshop on Basic Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities due to trauma, provided by Richmond Peace Education Center. The workshop provided insight into trauma informed care and resilience. This training will better equip us to process the sensitive needs of our students in relation to school, home and community. In collaboration with Armstrong Freshman Academy, we have prepared a grief counseling session, led by Rev. Andrea Kelly, for students before the holidays. Lastly, we are thrilled to announce our reconnection with Travelers Insurance Company. The Traveler's team, lead by Michael Alkins, joined us at Armstrong High School for a motivational session on personal development and job readiness. ...Kudos! The Fall Retreat happened November 18-20, 2016 at the Jamestown 4-H Center in Williamsburg, Virginia. Karen Donogan Salter led it. We are grateful for her many contributions over the past twelve years as our Retreat facilitator. We love you Ms. Woo-Woo!!! The theme was "Heroes Together...Unity in the Community." *More soon... Peace & Love*

— Yvette Rajput, Director, and Marvin Roane, Assistant Director

Learn more about Armstrong Leadership Program through Yvette Rajput at 804-783-7903, ext. 13, or, alp@richmondhillva.org



Above: Principal Mines of Armstrong High School, speaking with students during the Autumn Social Gathering.



At right: Yvette Rajput, Director greets guests, students, mentors and volunteers during the Autumn Social Gathering.

Special notification of a change in requested donation for overnight retreats:
Beginning January 2017, recommended donations are as follows: Basic Retreat \$80 per 24 hrs.
Guided Retreat \$100 per 24 hrs.

Richmond Hill Studies in

Retreats Classes Groups Schools Retreats Classes

RETREATS

INDIVIDUAL RETREATS

Richmond Hill offers individual retreats for persons who desire rest and time to seek God. Retreats may be taken in 24-hr increments between Mon. 4 p.m.– Sat. 4 p.m. In addition, more formal contemplative retreats are offered periodically on weekends for individuals who wish to be a part of a facilitated retreat rhythm. Spiritual guidance is available for any individual retreat.

*Recommended donations: Basic \$80 per 24 hrs. / Guided \$100 per 24 hrs.
Contact Deborah Cannady, 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org*

FIRST FRIDAY RETREATS

First Friday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A day for quiet reflection and spiritual renewal. Structure and guidance will be provided for those who want it as well as the option for one-on-one spiritual direction, or you can simply spend the day in silence—your choice.

Suggested Donation: \$20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Mimi Weaver, spiritual director and life coach. She can be reached at www.GraceMoves.com

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

LISTENING FOR 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.

GROUPS

CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS

Tuesdays, 4:45 - 5:45 p.m.

David Vinson, Facilitator

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

Jerry Deans, Rev. Vallerie King, Facilitators

Centering prayer is an ancient prayer method designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer by preparing us to cooperate with this gift. Each group is open to newcomers regardless of experience.

Contact: David Vinson at 783-7903 or hospitality@richmondhillva.org

DROP-IN GRIEF GROUP

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

Sandy Gramling, Ph.D., Facilitator

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

Preregistration is helpful but not required. Contact DeBorah Cannady at 804-783-7903 to register.

Koinonia School of Race & Justice: Re-Imagining Public Education

Finding Grace in Race:

[G]RACE

A public lecture series designed to encourage open and honest dialogue around issues of race and justice.

**Re-imagining
K-12 Public
Education**
*using a Panel
Discussion*

Feb.27
Monday
7:30 pm

This lecture will feature a panel of experts addressing and envisioning some emerging possibilities in the landscape of K-12 public school education.

In the Spring these lectures are scheduled on the last Monday of the month, as follows:

Monday, February 27
Re-Imagining Public Education

Monday, March 27
Media Bias & Race

Monday, April 24
Justice System & Race

The lecture will be followed by facilitated conversation and group processing time among the audience. Join us for worship at 5:30 pm, dinner at 6:30 pm, lecture at 7:30 pm. Your donation of \$20 includes both dinner and the lecture. For more information or to RSVP, please contact DeBorah Cannady at 804-783-7903, or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

FAITH IN THE CITY

WHEN...



FAITH IN THE CITY
January 3-6, 2017

On the campus of Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology
Virginia Union University, 1500 N. Lombardy, Richmond, VA 23220



Keynote Speaker

Rev. Michelle Higgins

Associate Pastor, South City Church
St. Louis, MO
Activist, Advocate and Organizer
with BLM Movement

Come! Join us as presenters and participants experience inspirational messages and lectures, then engage in deep dialogue and transformational learning moment, as we explore core issues of human identity, dignity, and the significance of community.

Event is co-sponsored by The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology and Richmond Hill.
Register for the *free* 3.5 day event by calling Ms. Yvette Goode, 804-257-5715



WORSHIP SERVICES

DAILY PRAYERS

Morning 7:00 - 7:30 A.M.
Noon 12:00 - 12:15 P.M.
Evening 6:00 - 6:15 P.M.

COMMUNITY WORSHIP

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Every Monday

The community celebrates Holy Communion. Services are led by ministers of various denominations according to their traditions. We invite you to join us afterwards for dinner in the refectory.

PRAYING WITH THE SONGS OF TAIZÉ

Jim Bennett, Leader
7:30 p.m. first Monday of each month

Taizé worship is contemplative and meditative in character, using short songs, repeated again and again in a candlelit chapel. The songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. 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 instruments.

SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE

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

For those who might find it helpful, 2-hour preparation sessions will be facilitated by Rev. Parker on the following Tuesdays during 2017: Jan 17th, May 16th, July 25th and Oct 17th. For more information, call DeBorah Cannady at 783-7903.

RETREATS



Saturday, January 17, 2017
9 am – 4 pm, in the Art Space

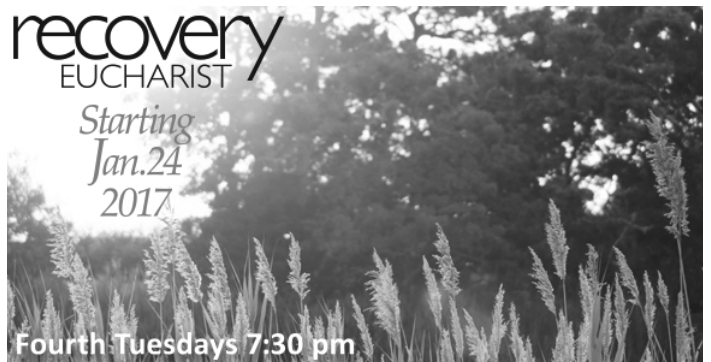
Enjoy a relaxing, refreshing, recharging day in the quiet and beauty of the Richmond Hill Art Space. There is time at the end of the day for sharing and reflection on the meaningful creative/spiritual process we experienced.

You can bring your own project and materials. Explore paper and found objects for collage, watercolors, pencil and markers. Consider making something to enhance your prayer time or make a gift for someone like a prayer card, landscape, bookmark, or an icon to reflect a person, concept, or scripture.

Facilitator: Brenda Giannini works to open us to the sacred dimensions of our lives through the gifts of the visual arts. In this program, we look at various art forms throughout the year and create our own works of art in the prayerful quiet of Richmond Hill.

Suggested donation: \$30.00 (includes lunch)

To register, please contact DeBorah Cannady, at (804) 783-7903 or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org



Introducing the Recovery Eucharist — a service devoted to healing and personal transformation found within 12-step spirituality and embodied in the Eucharist. A special invitation is extended to those recovering from any addiction and to those who desire to support people in recovery.

Starting on January 24, 2017, on 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 pm in Chapel.

CENTERING IN CHRIST THE BENEDICTINE PATH TO JOY



Most of us take the six weeks of Lent to reflect on our lives to see if our values and priorities are in line with God's desires for us. Since most of us find that we've wandered from the Christ-centered path we desire to travel, Lent offers us another opportunity to return to God with our whole heart.

In the sixth century, when the Roman Empire was breaking apart and politics, cultural life, and even the Church were in disarray — tumultuous times not unlike our own — Benedict of Nursia designed what he termed “a little rule” that showed monks the way to peace as they learned to prefer Christ above all things. The “Rule of Benedict” offers timeless and practical tools for living a Christ-centered life today.

The Reverend Jane Tomaine will facilitate this 24-hr retreat focused on how the Rule of Benedict can provide practices to strengthen leadership, community and living from the Spirit. Using tools from her book *St. Benedict's Toolbox: The Nuts and Bolts of Everyday Benedictine Living*, Jane will offer ways of praying and being in relationship that can open our hearts to Christ's love and help us journey joyfully to the Resurrection.

A Special 24-HOUR RETREAT

Friday, March 31 –
Saturday, April 1, 2017



JANE TOMAINE, DMin, author and Episcopal priest, lives in Mountainside, NJ. She is a nationally known retreat leader and workshop leader on the Rule and spirituality at monasteries, parishes and retreat centers. Learn more about Jane and her work at: www.stbenedictstoolbox.org

Date & Time: 4 pm, Friday, March 31 — 4pm, Saturday, April 1, 2017

Facilitator: Reverend Jane Tomaine

Suggested Donation: \$110

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Register online www.richmondhillva.org
or contact DeBorah Cannady at 804-783-7903, or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org



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December 2016



Metro Richmond at Prayer

In December:

Pray for the Families of Metropolitan Richmond.

Share your comments, or sign up to receive our monthly *UPDATE* newsletter
by emailing us your contact information: rrumble@richmondhillva.org

Richmond Hill is an ecumenical Christian fellowship and intentional residential community who serve as stewards of an urban retreat center within the setting of a historic monastery. Our Mission is to seek God's healing of Metropolitan Richmond through prayer, hospitality, racial reconciliation and spiritual development.

RICHMOND HILL'S DAILY CYCLE OF PRAYER

Pray for Metropolitan Richmond
Every Day: For the healing of metropolitan
Richmond; for the sick and those in our
hearts; for the welfare of all our citizens; for
the establishment of God's order in our
community.

MONDAYS: Our citizens who live in
the City of Richmond, the Mayor, Manager,
City Council, and School Board. Non-profit
organizations and their ministries. All
schools: students, teachers, and staff. Day
care centers. All who suffer from addic-
tion, 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 metropol-
itan 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 met-
ropolitan 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 metropol-
itan 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 busi-
nesses. 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.*



**Show your support with a Metro
Richmond at Prayer bumper sticker
Order online:**

**www.metroprayrva.org
or call (804)783-7903.**