

TENDING THE SPIRIT

God's Abiding Presence

As we embark on this New Year, the theme of altars has followed me into both my private and public reflection time. Drawing continuously on Barbara Brown Taylor's perspective of the altar — the place where human beings experience the divine over and over again. I ask myself, for myself and for others, what would it mean to live life ever mindful that there are altars all about us? First of all, it prompts me to seek to examine how others are experiencing the presence of Christ in me? It also prompts me to ask, where in metropolitan Richmond are the places we are most likely to experience the divine presence of God over and over again? Those places, I have discerned, are just as present in concepts as in physical things; such as when we find God's presence over and over again in Kingdom work or in the doctrines and theological constructs of our faith.

Though not stated explicitly this way, the testimony of one of Richmond Hill's founders and current president of Council, Don Cowles, in a recent reflection, speaks to finding the divine presence this way. In his testimony, Don shares the witness of many others who have experienced the presence of God over and over again while trekking the Micah journey — yet, in many different places.

As you read Don's reflection below, following the move of God's presence, do take time to discern if you detect an altar in our midst.

*Rev. Janie Walker
Co-Pastoral Director*

A Drop In The Bucket...

Jane and I moved to Richmond from New York City—almost 40 years ago. From our first Sunday, we chose to grow into our new City through St. Paul's Episcopal Church. In the decades that followed, we journeyed with the people of St. Paul's—in raising our families, in our work lives, and in building community across Richmond. It has been a wonderful adventure.

Particularly transformative for us has been the Micah Initiative, in which we have journeyed with St. Paul's people across Richmond to Woodville Elementary School in

the high-poverty East End. There, over the past 15 years, I have mentored two students—two out of the 50,000 that attended Richmond Public Schools during that time.

You might say that's a "drop in the bucket". But, that "drop in the bucket" mingled with others into a trickle and then trickles merged into a torrent—or as the prophet Amos says, an ever-flowing stream, rolling down like waters. I am amazed when I follow its course.

- In 1999, a handful of volunteers began St. Paul's partnership with Woodville, and, within 5 years, the volunteers grew to over 50. Some were mentors; others, lunch buddies or classroom sponsors; then, tutors and classroom assistants. They experienced new life—at Woodville and in themselves!

When personal relationships grow across divides of race, class, and neighborhood, trust grows and communities heal.

- When Woodville Principal Alberta Person experienced growth in teacher confidence and student enthusiasm, she called for more faith community participation. So, St. Paul's joined hands with the congregations of Good Shepherd Baptist and Woodville Presbyterian. Together, these faith partners hosted holiday dinners, teacher appreciation lunches and community service projects to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Then, St. Paul's parishioner Page Luxmoore led the three congregations to offer summer camp experiences to hundreds of Woodville students—for many their first experiences beyond their neighborhood.

- When Richmond Public Schools' Superintendent Deborah Jewell-Sherman saw Woodville's improved academic performance, she asked for more faith partners for her schools. The Micah movement spread. Now, over 100 faith communities partner with 23 Richmond elementary schools with over 1,500 volunteers each year. The drops had gathered in volume and speed, moving from trickle to torrent.

- In 2008, St. Paul's was invited to New York to share its Micah story with Trinity Wall Street and the Diocese of New York. Out of that meeting a national network of church-school partnerships was formed. It's called *All Our Children*, now with participants from 21 states, 66 cities and 29 dioceses.

- This coming January, All Our Children is hosting a National Symposium on the Church's Role in Education Equity. It will be held at Trinity Cathedral in Columbia, SC, January 16-18. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will address the Symposium, calling on the entire Episcopal Church to "follow Jesus into our public schools". All are invited!

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TENDING THE SPIRIT

• Today, the Micah Initiative continues at Woodville with new principal Shannon Washington—and at City Hall, the Virginia Board of Education and the General Assembly, where Micah volunteers advocate for more resources for high-poverty schools.

From a “drop in the bucket”, to a trickle, into a torrent. That’s how movements gather strength! But, the essence of this movement is Jesus great teaching—“Love one another.” The Micah Initiative is about caring personal relationships. In caring personal relationships, people—students, teachers, and volunteers—receive affirmation and experience dramatic new growth into the person God intends for each.

Recent brain research has explained this phenomenon. While the traumas of life, including the toxic stress of concentrated poverty, diminishes a child’s ability to learn, stable relationships with caring adults restore resilience, confidence, and learning capacity. New life begins! Amazing, isn’t it? Brain science is now backing up Jesus’ teaching!

And, then, yet another miracle emerges. When personal relationships grow across divides of race, class, and neighborhood, trust grows and communities heal. Richmond becomes more like the beloved community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

All from “a drop in the bucket”—caring for a Richmond student. What a journey!

Let “justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,” into all our neighborhoods, for all our children.

*Don Cowles, President
Richmond Hill Council*

Note: Micah has been a Richmond Hill program since 2001, most often referred to as The Micah Association.

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REVIVE RICHMOND

What Are We Waiting For?

Standing in line can be stressful. I remember feeling that a few years ago when I took the train into Philadelphia for the first time. Waiting to transfer in the 30th Street Station, I was disoriented and sure I was on the wrong track.

I ventured into Philly to see first-hand a number of inner-city ministries in action. According to a July 2013 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia’s poverty rate was the highest among the nation’s ten largest cities, then affecting 430,000 citizens of the city’s over 1.5 million residents.

My day began at The Simple Way – an intentional community similar to Richmond Hill – in the Kensington neighborhood where crime, drug abuse, poor schools, and inadequate housing are daily challenges. In another part of the city, I helped serve a warm lunch to over three hundred homeless men. Late that afternoon, I made my way to the entrance of an old church building in Center City, now home to Broad Street Ministry.

The doors were wide open as a crowd gathered for dinner. I was led into the large sanctuary where all the pews had been removed to accommodate 30 round tables. The place hummed with activity. A maître d’ greeted the guests as they arrived off the street. Volunteer waiters carried platefuls of food to those seated. There were no lines.

The dinner coordinator explained that great effort is taken to make guests feel as welcome and comfortable as possible. Those who have so little are too familiar with having to wait in line; be it for food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, whatever. Standing in line is traumatic when it’s a daily reminder of scarcity.

At Broad Street Ministry there is a commitment to ensuring there is always enough. Instead of waiting in line, guests are offered a seat in a comfortable waiting area. When a table opens, they are called by name and escorted to their place. For it to work, the guests had to be reassured again and again that the food wouldn’t run out. I was told it took months to build that trust.

Contrary to lighthearted jokes about standing in line at the Pearly Gates, God doesn’t do that to us. We are called by name and offered a place at the table. But the issue this Christmas/Epiphany season is not whether God prepares a place for us, but whether we’ve prepared a place for God. Any time we feed the hungry, care for the sick, visit those in prison, or accompany the lonely, we are on the right track.

We don’t have to go all the way to Philadelphia to see it happen. The opportunities abound here, too, in Richmond, to love neighbor as self and to let others know they matter. Our commitment at Richmond Hill is to nothing less. Hospitality requires us to not only open the doors, but to greet those who come as Christ. Doing so not only changes us, but could change this metropolitan city. What are we waiting for?

*Rev. Joel Blunk
Co-Pastoral Director*

Pray to Overcome in Christ's Name the Heritage of Racism in Metropolitan Richmond.

January 2018

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

January 7, 2018. We pray to overcome in Christ's name the heritage of racism: For the elimination of discrimination in living patterns, public education, employment, political jurisdiction, transportation, and churches in Metropolitan Richmond.

January 14, 2018. We pray to overcome in Christ's name the heritage of racism: To experience the victory of Jesus' resurrection over all personal and institutional results of racism and racial inequality in this metropolitan city.

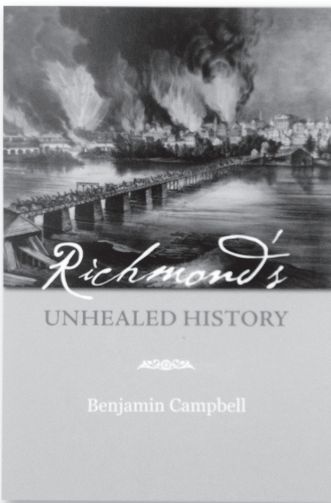
January 21, 2018. We pray to overcome in Christ's name the heritage of racism: To overcome ignorance, indifference, resentment, and bitterness with regard to race in both private and public life.

January 28, 2018. We pray to overcome in Christ's name the heritage of racism: To proclaim in word and deed the establishment of a beloved community in Metropolitan Richmond.

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.

A thank-you note received by the Community last month—

“I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity provided me by Richmond Hill to take a silent Retreat. I can honestly say that it has been decades since I have had an opportunity to reflect in the way offered by the Retreat. The environment at Richmond Hill is more conducive to reflection than I imagined. I entered the Retreat with reservations and jitters (which I confess I came back to from time to time) but I gained a great appreciation for the benefits of the rhythm of the Community which allowed me to re-engage with my intention as needed. I found the services moving and interesting. The specificity of the prayers at times was unexpected but I came to realize that this specificity speaks to the nature of the faith shared among you. Whether it was walking meditation in the gardens (which I had no idea existed and are beautiful) or sitting quietly by myself, I had the opportunity to seek to understand my connection with and responsibilities to the greater world. Forty-Eight hours of silence is a long time! The absence of opportunities to distract was particularly significant to me. I understand better that if I engage intentionally and productively with things of importance and avoid passively letting time pass, there is so much time available to me.

My only regret about the Retreat was that silence did not permit me to talk with members of the Community. I realized in my brief conversation with you how much that would have offered. But in the end, silence was appropriate and necessary to find out some surprising and encouraging things about myself. For that I am extremely grateful.

My best wishes and thanks to you and the other members of the Community.”

*Rob Acosta-Lewis
Retreatant*



*Prayer Books, Beads, and Blessing Bands
make thoughtful, wonderful gifts...
Now on sale in the Richmond Hill Bookstore*

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 Mary Lewis, 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org

FIRST FRIDAY RETREATS

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

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

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

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

LISTENING 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, 4:15 - 5:00 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 Mary Lewis at 804-783-7903 to register.

A creative way to process grief



Facilitator: Sandy Gramling, Ph.D., Spiritual Director and Coordinator of Grief Ministries at Richmond Hill. Suggested donation: \$20.00 (includes lunch) To register, please contact Mary Lewis, at (804) 783-7903 or by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org

The expressive arts have long been helpful in processing our grief. It is often restorative to bypass the intellect and work with our hands and heart. We can express our grief and find new insights about our journey.

Activities include:

- Collage (Vision Board)
- Writing (various exercises)
- Create a Mandala



RUAH SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

New Class Begins in September 2018 for Clergy & Church Professionals

Richmond Hill will begin a new weekday session of the RUAH School of Spiritual Guidance in September, 2018.

This weekday design is particularly intended to make the program available to clergy and other church professionals for whom Sunday classes are impossible.

The two-year program is composed of two 48-hour retreats and eight 24-hour retreats for each of two years. The 24-hour retreats are

Topics covered include:

- Use of Scripture in Discernment
- Contemplative Prayer
- History of Spirituality
- Dream Work
- Depth Psychology
- Social Transformation
- Theology of Spiritual Guidance
- Shared Humanity

held on the third Thursday evening and Friday each month; the 48-hour retreats extend from Wednesday supper through Friday.

The program consists of monthly retreats in the context of the rhythm of life of the Richmond Hill Community. Prayer and faith sharing are a part of the discipline of all participants. One book is assigned each month on the upcoming topic.

Acceptance in RUAH XVII is primarily limited to clergy and church professionals. If you are interested in this program, please inquire immediately to the Rev. Janie Walker, Co-Pastoral Director of Richmond Hill. ***The deadline for applications is May 1st.***

Some scholarship assistance is available.

For more information or an application, please contact Rev. Janie Walker, Co-Pastoral Director or DeBorah Cannady, Registrar of the RUAH School of Spiritual Guidance, at Richmond Hill. (804)783-7903 or email: jwalker@richmondhillva.org | dcannady@richmondhillva.org

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 Tuesday

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 Tuesday

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 Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Those struggling with illness have benefitted from being "soaked in prayer" over periods of time. Prayer ministers are available to pray with those desiring emotional, spiritual, or physical healing. Participants are invited to find a comfortable place, sit, relax, and receive prayer. Participants may also come and go during the service.

GENERATIONAL HEALING SERVICE

5th Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

Rev. Dr. Paula O. Parker, Leader

Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a service for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God's healing into your family, including generations that have gone before, as well as generations that will come after you. Participants are encouraged to bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of their ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). However, careful preparation of your personal genogram will help you pray more specifically for your family members.

For those who might find it helpful, 2-hour preparation sessions will be facilitated by Rev. Parker. For more information, call DeBorah Cannady at 783-7903.

COMMUNITY NEWS



ALP Holiday Social Gathering

Members of the Armstrong Leadership Program, mentors and volunteers enjoyed an evening of splendor, history and fellowship during its Holiday Social Gathering at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The highlight of the evening was the viewing of the Terracotta Army exhibit. The festive evening included delicious food and Christmas caroling. All in attendance shared statements of gratitude and reflections of 2017 as we looked forward to God's promises for the new year. Each student received a one year membership to visit the museum. A special thanks to **VMFA** and **Paula Saylor Robinson, Director of Audience Development and Community Engagement** at the Museum for providing us with a night to remember. The students also visited Lewis Ginter GardenFest of Lights (*seen in above photo*).

We thank you for your continued support of the Armstrong Leadership Program and facilitating us with the means to provide our students with the opportunities they deserve. *Learn more about Armstrong Leadership Program through Yvette Rajput at 804-783-7903, ext. 13, or, alp@richmondhillva.org* **Like Us on Facebook @ Armstrong-Leadership**

Save the Date...



Winter Luncheon City-Wide Micah Association

Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 12:00 noon
"The Spirit of Equity in Education"

Join us for warm fellowship, a delicious meal, and lively learning at our winter luncheon as we focus on the topic of equity in education. What is equity? What does it look like when it's present in our schools (or not)? What can we do, as volunteers in Richmond elementary schools, to work for equity?

Weinstein Jewish Community Center, 12:00 - 1:15 pm.
Meet and Greet at 11:30 am; Program & luncheon begins at noon.
RSVP: micah@richmondhillva.org

Taizé Retreat

FRIDAY - SUNDAY
JANUARY 19-21
2018



Taizé Retreat starts the New Year for many

Some thirty participants will join the Richmond Hill community for the first ever Taizé Retreat this month. The 48-hours were patterned after Taizé, “that little springtime” in the Southeastern French Alps. The weekend will consist of small group formation, conscious work in the community, chances to learn about both the mission of Taizé and Richmond Hill, and, of course, time to pray the songs of Taizé. Each of the regular prayer times will be done in Taizé fashion incorporating songs of Taizé, silence, and daily prayer for metropolitan Richmond.



I want to thank Jim Bennett for allowing my students to sing at the 30th Anniversary Celebration! This service truly warmed my heart! These children validate my existence! I'll leave you with a conversation I had with a 4th grader:

Student: “Mr. Ware it is so warm in this church.”
Me: “Well, I’m sure they have the heat on.”
Student: “It isn’t the heater... I’m sure this place is warm all by itself.”

I literally started to cry. — *This 30th Celebration Flashback is from Mr. Tevin Ware, Music Teacher, Oak Grove Elementary School, who shared this story on Facebook after his students performance at the 30th Celebration.*

Finding Grace in Race:



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

Re-Imagining
K-12 Public
Education

Seminar
Discussion

March 24
Saturday
9 am - 4 pm

KOINONIA School of Race and Justice is designed to equip people in three ways: to engage in transformative and self-reflective work around race; to engage in constructive dialogue regarding issues of race and justice; and to engage in the larger community to promote social justice.

The KOINONIA School of Race and Justice intends to be a part of God’s ministry of racial reconciliation and is grounded in the Christian tradition. We believe everyone can engage in reducing racism by being instruments of justice in their own sphere of influence. All are welcome.

The day-seminars are scheduled for Saturdays from 9-4 on March 24, and April 21. The cost for each is \$50, which includes lunch. The weekend retreat will be held from Friday at 4 pm to Sunday at 4 pm, May 4-6, 2018, at a cost of \$195. For further information, please contact Rev. Janie Walker or Rev. Joel Blunk at (804) 783-7903.

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

Training: Faith-Rooted Organizing January 29-February 1, 2018

Noted Author Lisa Sharon Harper will return to Richmond to deliver an in-depth Faith-Rooted Organizing training at Richmond Hill. Faith-Rooted Community Organizing and Advocacy training draws from the deep wells of wisdom from multiple heroes of biblical justice and from the rich spiritual core of historic justice movements. Participants will gain the basic tools and insights needed to analyze their community, strategize, build collaborative networks, and take action, all in a way that draws from the roots of their faith. This workshop equips all people of faith whether clergy, students, teachers, seekers, young or old to marshal their unique gifts and bring them to bear on social justice issues and the common good.



Richmond Hill is a community partner with Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation/Richmond. Presented as part of TRHT, this training is a first step in bringing faith communities together from across Richmond to tell our region’s story in new ways, build authentic, justice-oriented relationships across social and economic divides, and to work jointly to end structural racism. For more information, visit www.greaterrva.org

For the spirit of the city



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January 2018



**Metro
Richmond at
Prayer**

In January:

**Pray to Overcome in Christ's Name
the Heritage of Racism 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 citizens; for the establishment of God's order in our community.

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

TUESDAYS: Our citizens who live in Hanover County, the Board of Supervisors, School Board, and Manager. The print and broadcast media. The churches of metropolitan Richmond: members and clergy. All who live in poverty. All who suffer from mental illness.

WEDNESDAYS: The Governor of Virginia, the General Assembly, and all who work in State Government. All who work in businesses which provide services to others. All who work in construction. Hospitals and nursing homes: patients, residents, and staff; all who provide health care. Victims of violent crime; all who commit violent crime. All senior citizens.

THURSDAYS: Our citizens who live in Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg, the town and city Councils and Managers. All who work in banks and finance; all making financial decisions for greater Richmond. Prisons and jails of metropolitan Richmond: prisoners and staff. All who are unemployed or underemployed. All public servants.

FRIDAYS: Our citizens who live in Henrico County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in the manufacturing industry in metropolitan Richmond. The police, fire, and rescue workers. The courts. All

young people. All who hurt, need inner healing, or are unable to love.

SATURDAYS: Our citizens who live in Chesterfield County, the Supervisors, School Board, and County Manager. All who work in retail trade in metropolitan Richmond, and those who own our businesses. Counselors and spiritual directors. The Sisters of the Visitation of Monte Maria. All victims of abuse; all perpetrators of abuse.

SUNDAYS: Our citizens who live in the Counties of Charles City, Goochland, Powhatan, and New Kent, the Supervisors, School Boards, and Managers. An end to racism and racial prejudice. All places of prayer or worship: churches, mosques, and synagogues. Universities, colleges, and technical schools. All who seek God.

We pray daily at Richmond Hill for persons or situations for which our prayers are requested. Call us at 804-783-7903.

Share your comments, or sign up to receive our monthly printed UPDATE newsletter here: rrumble@richmondhillva.org

If you would like to subscribe to eUPDATE, our email newsletter, go here: eepurl.com/cNLLbj

You can find us, like us, share us: **facebook:** RichmondHillVa **twitter:** RichmondHillVa2 **instagram:** richmondhillva

