

## TENDING THE SPIRIT

# The Oneness of God

Early August ushered in contemplative and reflective moments around the concept of the "Oneness of God." The musings came shortly after engaging a Biblical text referencing Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus and a MSN news flash that came across my computer just a few days later.

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul begged the congregants to lead a life worthy of the calling to which they were called and to make every effort to maintain the

unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He reassured them that in Christ there is "one body, one Spirit, one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, who is above, through and in all." The newsflash, however, referenced a rare but unprecedented phenomenon which occurred in Rowlett, Texas. Thousands of spiders joined forces to build webs over 40 feet high — tall enough to cover trees. The "glistening webs... draping the trees like shrouds" stretched along a road in this Dallas

suburb. The spiders came together in a communal effort to spin these webs.

The power of oneness! The "oneness of God" is a foundational doctrine in the Bible, but all too often takes on many different perspectives and theologies when discussed. Despite the differences in perspectives, inherently we know the importance of "oneness" to our spiritual life. Because we live in a society that fosters separation and divisions, this inherent understanding begs two questions: What message did the spiders bring? What could oneness mean to any community which claims God's creative power in their lives?

Our perspective — the place in which we stand — determines what we see. It is sure to speak to what we can envision, the goals we are willing to set, and that for which we are willing to work. Surely, the fulfillment of a call to

unity — oneness — will do no less than afford us the ability to understand and love each other.

The good thing about perspectives is, they can change. One's understanding can change as location and roles change. Having just received two new residential members into the community through the Urban Service Corps Program here, I was careful to encourage them to view their entrance into the community as an entrance into an unfamiliar culture. That way, they can embrace the joy of new things and those things which surprise them. Besides, they would likely be less disappointed about unfulfilled

> expectations. With my own change in roles here, it is certainly a piece of advice I must apply to my own circumstances. For sure, it has forced me to consider the demands of the Gospel from yet another and broader perspective.

> Seeking to provide guidance and spiritual nurture to a diverse community of residents, staff and volunteers has given me a greater appreciation for the leadership we have had up to this point. It has also given me a new optic by which to approach scripture. It has

broadened my view of how the Gospel must be lived out; not to mention how it has deepened my desire to fulfill God's call to do so.

Being ever mindful that Richmond Hill is an intentional ecumenical Christian community, re-reading of the Gospel so as to discover how Jesus of Nazareth functioned in relation to changes in his culture and his various roles is a primary consideration. Discerning how he functioned then will surely help me discern how he is functioning now in our midst. And, it is obviously a discernment that cannot be done in a vacuum or in isolation.

I am fully conscious that where we have stood historically and culturally over the years, both inwardly and physically, speaks to how we see things. This present conditioned perspective is what we bring to any new role or location. Though conditioned perspectives

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## TENDING THE SPIRIT

make it difficult to take in the new from time to time, as we are being stretched, it is precisely this dynamic that touches the hidden and liberating mysteries of the Gospel at various points in our journey. It is also this very dynamic that makes ministry enjoyable and inspiring. No wonder the Apostle Paul spoke so often of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

Whether talking about our role or our location, a common question raised here is: "Why has God brought me here?" Surely God knows that each of us come with our own biases, historical, cultural and class conditioning. Surely God knows we live in a society that gives value to people on the basis of their place of origin. And we live in a society which has, for too long, viewed connection, cooperation and collaboration as weakness rather than strength. Yet, we come together with intention, learning day by day that we cannot live life here with any sense of comfort or enjoyment without letting go of aspects of our prevailing perspectives. Which, by the way, prevents us from truly connecting with one another.

The very nature of Kingdom work is to break down all dividing walls that separate or divide people -- which keep all of us from connecting and becoming the Beloved Community we are called to be in Christ.

The reality of how God works in and through each of us — irrespective of how we got here, or how long it took us to get here — continues to speak to the Spirit's creation work of becoming in this place. The creative working power of the "oneness of God" is a reality we know we have no power to change.

> Reverend Janie M. Walker, Interim Pastoral Director

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# REVIVE RICHMOND

# **Reviving through education**

Richmond Hill's Armstrong Leadership Program sponsored the College Showers Initiative again for the fourth year honoring the Armstrong High School graduates attending four-year universities/colleges. This year, fourteen organizations and churches hosted sixteen graduates with a "College Shower." The groups put much effort in interviewing the graduates to determine their needs. One graduate commented, " No one had ever gone to the effort to do so much for him before in his life." He was just amazed that folks had thought of everything he might need to set up his dorm room. Some of the items were sheets, towels, toiletries, school supplies, gift cards, iron, ironing board, dorm sized refrigerator, laptop computers and one student even received a brand new bicycle. Along with gifts, volunteers have provided transportation for the graduates for Freshman orientation and even assisted the families on move-in day. One graduate explained that he was the first in his family to go away to college and to have the wonderful things to take with him was so much more than he expected. He could not thank them enough.

The showers were hosted in a variety of places: churches, businesses and even at a country club. The hosts were so impressed with the young people and they appreciated getting to know them. One student's parents expressed that they were so grateful for the group's efforts. They have worked so hard to provide for their son since their arrival in this country, but they did not have the money to get him ready for the college.

All of the groups expressed how much the initiative has meant to them. Of all the different projects they support throughout the year, The College Shower Initiative had made them feel so connected to the community and of course; they looked forward in supporting the initiative next year. Most of the hosts plan to keep in touch with their honorees as they complete their freshman year.

Dr. Mary Anne Stone (Cathedral of the Sacred Heart), Volunteer Coordinator of the College Shower Initiative

We invite churches, temples, mosques, sororities, fraternities, business/social organizations, and alumni associations to join the network of supporters by hosting a College Shower for a residential college-bound Armstrong High School student. We are grateful for all of our hosts this year in making the DREAM of attending college a REALITY!!! Your support is an example of God's grace in Action. Special thanks to Shakye Jones, Armstrong College Advisor of the UVA College Advising Corps. You may see the complete list of sponsoring hosts on page 3 of this newsletter.

> Yvette Davis Rajput, Director Armstrong Leadership Program

Pray for the Schools and Educational Institutions of Metropolitan Richmond.

Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children. (Deut 4:9)
September 6, 2015. We pray for schools and educational

**September 6, 2015.** We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all Super-intendents, School Boards, School Administrators, PTAs, teachers, students, and staff.

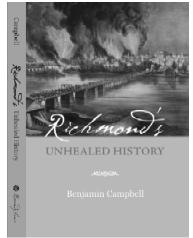
**September 13, 2015.** We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all public schools; for students, teachers and support personnel, including cafeteria workers, building and grounds staff, and school bus drivers; for all private and religious schools, pre-schools and daycare centers, and for children in home schools.

**September 20, 2015.** We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all universities, colleges, seminaries, trade, technical, graduate, and professional schools; for the students, faculty, and staff of these institutions.

**September 27, 2015.** We pray for schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy relationships between parents, teachers, and students; for cooperation between Superintendents and Administrators of public and private schools throughout this metropolitan city.

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# THURSDAY, OCT. 15, 2015 8:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M.

Now in its sixth year, the Clergy Convocation provides local clergy with practical information for engagement and prayer on specific issues facing the people of metropolitan Richmond. This year we are taking a close look at the political, social and economic impact of the proposed BRT project and the future of public transportation in metropolitan Richmond.

Contact Richmond Hill to register at 804-783-7903 or email: mcraighead@richmondhillva.org

# Armstrong Leadership Program thanks this year's hosts for their generous support of the college shower program

**2015** *Hosts:* Unity of Richmond, LARKS, Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Faith Community Baptist Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bethany Place Baptist Church, Christ Episcopal Church, St. John's Episcopal Church, Barbara Brown & Friends, Denise Lewis & Top Ladies, Brenda Tucker & Friends, Hunton & Williams LLP, and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. We invite churches, temples, mosques, sororities, fraternities, business/social organizations, and alumni associations to join the network of supporters by hosting a College Shower for a residential collegebound Armstrong High School student. *Contact Yvette Davis Rajput, Director of Armstrong Leadership Program for additional information @ 804-314-2622.* 

# Community Trustbuilding Fellowship 2015-2016

# Building trust in the heart of community

*INITIATIVES OF CHANGE* | *HOPE IN THE CITIES* is now enrolling participants in a unique program designed to increase the capacity of community leaders to overcome divisions of race, culture, economics and politics. They seek to create a network of skilled facilitators, capable teambuilders and credible role models. This residential training program in community trustbuilding will be offered at Richmond Hill and consists of five 48-hr. weekend retreats. The first weekend is scheduled for October 16-18, 2015.

More information and applications available at www.us.iofc.org/ctf

# 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.

### Upcoming Facilitated Retreats: Sat. - Sun. Nov. 7-8

Recommended donations: Basic \$65 per 24 hrs. / Guided \$90 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 TO THE SILENCE

Second Tuesday of Each Month | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Arrive at Richmond Hill at 8:45 to begin this spiritual experience. Lunch and chapel are included. Bring your Bible and your journal but leave the cell phone in the car.

Suggested Donation: \$20 (includes Lunch) Facilitator: Rita Ricks, spiritual director Contact DeBorah Cannady at Richmond Hill to register 804-783-7903 or retreats@richmondhillva.org Pleas register in advance. Space is limited.

# GROUPS

## **CENTERING PRAYER GROUPS**

Tuesdays, 4:45 - 5:45 p.m. Deborah Streicker, 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: Deborah Streicker at 783-7903 or dstreicker@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.* 



*The cost of the retreat is \$65.00, which includes lodging, all meals, and all program activities. To register, contact DeBorah Cannady by email: retreats@richmondhillva.org or (804) 783-7903.* 

As the holidays approach, the memories of loved ones who have passed on can be particularly bittersweet.

This retreat is for people at any point in the grief journey who seek more light, healing and clarity in the midst of their suffering. There will be a range of guided and self-paced meaning-making exercises that individuals all along the post-bereavement journey often find beneficial.

Retreat activities will also include brief presentations on coping with loss and small group discussion.

Sandy Gramling, coordinator of Grief Ministries at Richmond Hill, is serving as retreat facilitator. Sandy is a licensed clinical psychologist on faculty in the department of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University.

# Urban Spirituality 2015-2016

Groups Schools Retreats Classes Groups Schools

# New Lecture Series for the Fall 2015

# Participate in the continuing conversation:



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

# **KOINONIA** School of Race & Justice

# "Theology of Race" Rev. Ben Campbell

SEPTEMBER 28, MONDAY, 7:30 PM

This lecture will explore the theological underpinnings of race in our culture. About the lecturer: Rev. Ben Campbell is an Adjunct Pastor at Richmond Hill and author of *Richmond's Unhealed History*.

# "Cultural Bias" Dr. Allen Lewis

**OCTOBER 26, MONDAY, 7:30** PM Dr. Lewis explores the definition of cultural bias, how people interface with difference, and steps to manage bias. About the lecturer: Dr. Allen Lewis is Head of JMU Department of Health Sciences and author of We Are All Racists: *The Truth about Cultural Bias*.

# [3]

# "Effects of Trauma" Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary

**NOVEMBER 23, MONDAY, 7:30** PM This is an exploration of the residual effects of the trauma of slavery and racism as it relates to guilt, shame, and lament. About the lecturer: Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary is a psychologist and co-pastor of Spring Creek Baptist Church in Chesterfield, VA.

Each 45 minute 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 requested donation of \$20 includes both dinner and the lecture. To register, please contact DeBorah Cannady at retreats@richmondhillva.org or by phone at 804-783-7903.

## 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** *Leader: Jim Bennett*

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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 candle lit chapel. Using just a few words, the songs express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over many times, the hope is this reality will gradually penetrate one's whole being. Meditative singing thus becomes a way of listening to God.

We invite you to participate in our practice of Taizé which includes singing, prayer for Metropolitan Richmond, and a period of silence. Jim Bennett is a skilled musician and leads this time of worship with a variety of musical instruments.

# SOAKING PRAYER SERVICE

DeBorah Cannady, Leader 3rd Mondays at 7:30 p.m. and 1st Thursdays at 10:00 a.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.

# **EUCHARIST FOR GENERATIONAL HEALING** *5th Mondays at 7:30 p.m.*

Once a quarter, Richmond Hill offers a Eucharist for Generational Healing. This is an opportunity to invite God's healing into your family, including the generations that have gone before and the generations that will come after you. Please bring the blessings as well as the pains and traumas of your ancestry written on a piece of paper (not to be shared). For more information call DeBorah Cannady at 783-7903.

# Friendship

**F**riendship is an enduring primary interpersonal relationship between two or more persons who share common interests and activities. Friendship is characterized by a mutual reciprocal desire to be together for these common purposes and by varying levels of self-disclosure and interjected bonding. Friendship is experienced as both an achievement and as a gift. The acceptance and understanding without are experienced as a means of Divine grace. The bonding as a dimension of covenantal community and the growth and outcome as evidence of God's Power for beginning, as new personal and social conditions give evidence.

All these definitions applied to Jesus and His friends Martha and Mary: "Now it happened as they went He entered a certain village and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus feet and heard His words. But Martha was distracted with much serving and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed and Mary has chosen that good part which will not be taken from her." (Luke 10:38-42, NKJ). Friendships are different at times and in different ways depending on the situation.

Joseph Scriven watched in shock as the body of His fiancé was pulled from the lake. Their wedding had been planned for the next day. Reeling from the tragedy he made up in his mind to immigrate to America. Packing up his belongings in Dublin, Ireland, he sailed to Canada leaving his mother behind. He was about 25 years old at the time. Ten years later in 1855, he received word that his mother was facing a crisis. Joseph wrote this poem and sent it to her. Mrs. Scriven evidently gave a copy to a friend who had it published anonymously and it quickly became a popular hymn though no one knew who had written it. This text was applied to song: "Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guide your heart and mind through Jesus Christ." (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJ). Joseph had a friendship that will last forever. The Song: "What A Friend We Have In Jesus." We to can have lasting friendship with the Lord if we only believe. "Friendship goes a long ways" said my father.

> *Rev. Dr. Alice W. Harris Pastoral Counselor*

### REFLECTION ON THE RULE

### IN DIRECTION

# **COMMUNITY**— *Living one's life as life together, in a commitment to shared mission and a common life.*

There were many things that drew me to the Urban Service Corps program at Richmond Hill. The cycle of prayer at Richmond Hill was something that I really craved. Praying for the city of Richmond really speaks to me as I see the needs for it's healing. I was also drawn to the idea that I would get to learn from others, both guests and residents. Most importantly I felt called to be a part of the community at Richmond Hill.

The community at Richmond Hill is unique; it is made up of residents, guests, and other people affiliated with the programs here. It is a very welcoming community. I have only been living at Richmond Hill for about two weeks. So far most of my experiences have been with the residential community. The first part of our definition of rule of community is "living one's life as life together". This is something that is done at Richmond Hill almost all day. As a resident I share pray, eat, and work along side the other residents. This is huge change for me. This change has been good, but it is an adjustment.

The next part of the definition "in a commitment to a shared mission" has been easier for me to grasp. I wholeheartedly felt called to be a part of the programs and mission of Richmond Hill. This includes the practical side of keeping the building functional for guests, but also the other mission of Richmond Hill, which mission that we are praying healing of metropolitan Richmond. For me this is important to keep in mind when my days are long and filled with a variety of jobs.

The final part "a common life" is probably the biggest change for me. My life has changed so much in the first two weeks that I have been here. Richmond Hill is my community, and this means that other things in my life are no longer top priority. My life is praying, eating, working and being a part of this community.

# Heather Peterson Urban Service Corps

**Heather Peterson** arrived in the Richmond Hill community in August this year when she joined the Urban Service Corps Class of 2015-16. Heather is a member of Grace & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Richmond and a participant in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia's Young Priest Initiative.

# Season's greetings

I was standing in the Sundial outside the Solarium as I wrote this morning, the warm humid air of fall all around me. I looked up and out the south-facing open window, and I saw a full moon high over the cedar trees. It reminded me of the passing of time and season.

And I felt it yesterday as I strolled past the Tricycle Community Garden by Chimborazo Park. I totally missed looking at that garden this summer. It went from a state of fresh spring promise to slumped fall resignation... what a strange juxtaposition — that inevitable march of the seasons, coinciding with the renewal our schools and program year here at Richmond Hill, as well as other places all over the metropolitan city.

The Fall. In my younger days, I'd cringe at the first sighting of a "back-to-school" advertisement. "Who do these people think they are?" we'd ask one another. "They're robbing us of our summer vacation! It's only August, and they're already pushing us back to the class room. That's not fair! It's outrageous! Disgusting!"

Over the years, my youthful despair diminished until it reached the point of me actually liking the Back to School routine. The siren song of *tabula rasa* — that clean slate every September offered real comfort and had some real appeal as I racked up my failures and mistakes.

Something about how the sunflowers folded over and how every garden bed looked faded really struck me. There was so much produce left on those tired vines brilliant red tomatoes, fiery orange habeneros — an aftershock of abundance. Like the dance was over, but the band played on. Sad. Poignant. Beautiful.

My Dad has been through some hard stuff this summer. He is almost 93 years old and he's winding down. His lens is changing my outlook, causing me to see diminishment and decay where once all I saw was possibility. It's a hard lesson.

But then, there's the new stuff. When I arrived at Richmond Hill three years ago, there were three programs here. Now, in addition to RUAH, Pastoral Care, and Healing Prayer, there's Vocare, and the Koinonia School of Race & Justice. That's the juxtaposition newness, possibility, healing.

That's the beauty of this time and place. Seeing new life emerging out of old patterns is thrilling. Saying goodbye as the old fades away is hard. I wonder about our roots, our stalks and stems — the vegetation of our lives. What fruit are we bringing forth?

This fall, my season is seasoned with a complex blend of new and old, fear and anticipation, joy and wonder. So, turn, turn, turn...to everything, there is a season.

> Richard Rumble Communications Director



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

# September 2015



In September:

# Pray for the Schools and Educational Institutions 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 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.



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