For the spirit of the city RICHMOND HILL

2209 E. GRACE STREET, RICHMOND VA 23223 | FALL 2024

TENDING THE SPIRIT

God is Doing a New Thing at Richmond Hill

Isaiah 43:19 (ESV) - "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

Time is filled with swift transition, Naught of earth unmoved can stand, Build your hopes on things eternal, Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Jennie Wilson (1913)

As I reflect on the season we are in, not only here at Richmond Hill but in our country and society in general, the relevancy of these words rings true. Time truly is filled with swift transitions.

Often periods of change can leave us feeling as though we are in a wilderness experience. For us, the wilderness experience started with the COVID-19 Pandemic when we were forced to live and operate very differently than in the past. Just as the country began to emerge

from pandemic mode and we were about to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, a major pipe burst in the building in December of 2022 forcing us to once again suspend operations for another 10 months.

We are again able to host retreatants, train spiritual directors, and provide spiritually uplifting services to the citizens of Metropolitan Richmond. With God's help, we have overcome much — and now find ourselves in another season of transition with the departure of two beloved Co-Pastoral Directors. The road has been rough and the going equally tough!

We would be remiss if we did not pause and attempt to discern what God is telling us through all of this. While I do not claim to have all the answers to that question, this passage of scripture found in Isaiah 43:19 continues to resonate. "Behold, I am doing a new thing;

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

In verses 15 through 17 of this passage, God reminds the people of the various ways God delivered them in the past. In verse 18, God instructs the people to forget about those things. God said, "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old." Was God telling the people to forget the fact that God delivered and blessed them over and over? No! They were called

to remember that God is faithful to deliver, but that they should not become wedded to the ways in which God delivered them in the past. For example, God always fed the people, but once they reached the borders of Canaan and settled in habitable land, the manna from heaven stopped. God still provided food through the land but the method changed.

We can rest assured that God's hand is unchanging in faithfulness to us, but our God is never to be assigned to the realm of the predictable. The past informs us that God can—and God will!—bring us through, but the ways and methods by which it will happen are known

only by God. God parted the Red Sea during the Israelites' first exodus but promised to make streams in the desert for the second.

What does this mean for our Richmond Hill Community? I believe that God has been whispering this passage in our ears for a number of years now. God has been leading us to this "new thing," knowing that the change we experience would feel much like a wilderness. And God has been making a way for us in that experience all along!

God whispered this passage to us when the Spirit led us to embark upon a strategic planning process and led us to work with two very capable and Godly consultants in the persons of Susan Wilkes and Ryan Ripperton. God was whispering, "Do you perceive it?" when we were led to adopt a plan in 2023 that calls us to

God Whispers Do you Perceive it?

UPDATE 1 Fall 2024

Richmond Hill Council Members

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<u>Urban Service Corps</u> Mukshah Chingzung Phom

Residents

Rev. Peter Hawisher-Faul Allison Schwartz

TENDING THE SPIRIT

recommit ourselves to our mission and deepen our commitment to racial healing. God whispers to us now as we prepare to follow the imperatives of the plan: to sustain our people, to uplift our unique programming, and to continue to steward this beloved place. We prepare for the new that will emerge from our current struggles. New life requires labor.

God has used this organization in mighty ways and has done some miraculous things for us in the past. A strong foundation has been laid for us and ministry has and will continue to take place here. Yet God is calling us to perceive the new thing, the new ways we need to operate that will sustain us for the future, and we have answered the call! To achieve our goals, further our mission and ensure our relevancy for the future, we will need to find new ways of being with one another and with the community. We are ready to meet that challenge!

While we search for new leadership, we are also examining the current model and structure and are prepared to make the necessary changes. We are evaluating our programs, with the goal of preserving the unique aspects of our offerings, and we are committed to preserving this beautiful place as well as the financial resources God has provided for us.

While the current reality is challenging, I get excited when I begin to perceive the new thing that God is doing in the life of Richmond Hill. I pray that you will join us in our efforts to be faithful stewards of this beloved organization as we actively seek God's transformation of Metropolitan Richmond through prayer, racial healing, hospitality, and spiritual development. The faithfulness of God's hands is unchanging but only God knows what miracles God will make happen on our behalf!

Trust in Him who will not leave you, Whatsoever years may bring, If by earthly friends forsaken Still more closely to Him cling. When your journey is completed, If to God you have been true, Fair and bright the home in glory Your enraptured soul will view. Chorus: Hold to God's unchanging hand,

Hold to God's unchanging hand, Hold to God's unchanging hand, Build your hopes on things eternal, Hold to God's unchanging hand.

> Rev. Lorae D. Ponder Acting Pastoral Director

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Ora Et Labora Retreats

Come participate in "Ora et Labora," the Benedictine motto of prayer and work. We invite you to consider joining us fo a day, a weekend, or a week in supporting our ministry of hospitality by offering your time and talents and enjoying a retreat of your own in the space between. You can find more information and submit an inquiry on our website or reach out to Rev. Tom Baynham,

at tbaynham@richmondhillva.org

Richmond Hill Sojourn

The Richmond Hill Sojourn offers an opportunity for you to immerse yourself in the rhythms of Richmond Hill: our call to a life of prayer, hospitality, spiritual development, and racial reconciliation all in the name of healing Metropolitan Richmond. We invite you to consider joining for a one-month, two-month, or a three-month term. You can find information and submit an inquiry on our website.

RICHMOND HILL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

"For Such a Time as This"

Esther 4:14

We are thrilled to share with you Richmond Hill's Strategic Plan. This plan sets the course for our organization's future, with three imperatives that offer a strong framework for our next three years.





RUAH XX

Rooted and Grounded in Love

"...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love." Ephesians 3:17

ast year, we laid out a bold vision for our stewardship work at Richmond Hill using this verse from Ephesians as our guide. Over the past year, amidst much change and transition, we have worked to build development practices rooted and grounded in love.

With this vision, we've challenged ourselves to fundraise in a way that is fueled by the Spirit and in alignment with the Gospel. We've expanded our development team to include Kelsey Hawisher-Faul as our Development Coordinator and Andrew Schwartz as our Grants and Program Liaison. Grounded in faith, we've worked together as a team to create a culture of generosity and joy throughout our community, both inside and outside our walls.

Now, as God invites us to pay attention to the "new thing" springing forth, our development work must be both grounded and growing to meet the changing needs of our mission and ministry in 2024 and beyond.

As we navigate our leadership transition and lean into the work that God is calling for us through our Strategic Plan, "For Such a Time as This," our imperatives are clear. Richmond Hill is called **to sustain our people**, **uplift our unique programming**, and **steward this beloved place on the Hill**.

Richmond Hill has run on faith and a shoestring for a long time, and we know that this Strategic Plan calls us into a more robust financial vision for our organization.

As we celebrate our Season of Stewardship, your support is critical. Richmond Hill has been called for such a time as this, and we must be organizationally strong to meet this moment. We invite you to make a much-needed investment in the future of Richmond Hill by committing to our Annual Fund. And, as our Strategic Plan is a three-year plan, we are asking our regular supporters to consider a three-year sustaining gift, committing to sustain the organization through this transformative time.

Together we can ensure that Richmond Hill continues to be a place of transformation and spiritual renewal for our entire community.



Check out richmondhillva. org/give or scan the QR Code here for ways to support this place and ministry! As always, we are so glad to be in this work alongside you.

Rev. Lindsey Franklin Associate Pastor for Development

Revelations

abbi Rabbi Zissel Zev says "The human heart is the work of a lifetime and that is just why we have been given a lifetime in which to do it." This beautifully sums up the spiritual journey that RUAH has awakened in me, and what convinces me that I will not only continue in the second year of the RUAH program but also continue to pursue directed learning beyond RUAH as the Spirit leads me.

In 2017, I discovered noon prayer and once a week luncheons at Richmond Hill. I began attending regularly and met many fellow pilgrims on the Christian journey. Some of those fellow pilgrims were in a Richmond Hill program called RUAH. The more conversations I had with RUAH students, the more I felt drawn to the program. Finally, evolving family life and the passing of the pandemic allowed me to pursue RUAH as a participant. I applied to the program in the Spring of 2023.

The combined guidance of our RUAH dean, Elnora Allen, and her fellow instructors Dennis Beeman and Paul Amrhein, my personal spiritual director, Sheryl Johnson, and the authors of each of the books we have read have helped me discover my true self without fear or shame. My relationship with God deepened through ritual, prayer, various personality rubrics, dream interpretation, rule of life and silent retreats.

RUAH has been the spiritual equivalent of dining at an opulent banquet. Each course delights and makes me crave the next even though the abundance of the feast cannot possibly be consumed at one sitting. I feel as though I have grown more spiritually in this year than I have at any other time in my life as a Christ follower, and that includes the year of my cancer diagnosis and subsequent treatment.

Linda Melin Ruah XX Participant

SEASON OF STEWARDSHIP BEGINS!

s this update goes to print, we are busy preparing for the Season of Stewardship— our annual celebration of the generosity

that sustains this place and ministry.

This stewardship season includes our 3rd Annual Breakfast in the Garden (September 13th)



and our annual Amazing Praise celebration (September 17 - 19) a 48-hour collaborative online fundraiser with Christian non-profits working together for shared impact in greater Richmond (*www.theamazingpraise.org*). Learn more at *www.richmondhillva.org/stewardship!*

STAFF NEWS

Seeing With Expectant Curiosity

🕇 ach week I walk through the gardens and grounds of Richmond Hill guided by expectant curiosity and wonder. My primary question is, see what's asking to be tended. Do the lawns need to be mowed? What weeds are cropping up, and what are they telling me about the soil and environment of that particular space? Is there pruning or deadheading to do? Shall I sweep the paths? Which members of our other-than-human community are showing up today?



I also tune in to the land's essence, a layer of existence that I see and experience at the periphery of my everyday seeing. Beyond very practical messages, what is the land telling me? What holy happening is unfolding? What divine message do I read for today? I look to see through the eyes of my heart and soul.

One particularly supportive way this unfolds for me is in how the land and all her inhabitants become a "holy mirror." When I bring my questions to the land, and allow myself to be led to a place that I am shown, I discover a deep and abiding truth reflected back to me by another member of creation's community.

You, too, are invited to experience this way of seeing and being seen by the land and participate with God in the unfolding story of creation in this particular place, while visiting our gardens or join us to tend them as a volunteer. Whether you are an avid gardener or simply curious, you are welcome! Reach out to Co-Gardeners Beth & Allison at garden@richmondhillva.org.

THANK You

earest Richmond Hill Community, Thank you for calling me to be one of your co-pastoral directors for a season at Richmond Hill. It's been the highlight of my ministry to serve, pray, and minister alongside the residents, staff, and dedicated volunteers of Richmond Hill. I am honored to have been a part of supporting and shepherding the early stages of the strategic plan. I truly believe it was developed for such a time as this and that Richmond Hill is shoring itself up for generations

The words of Mary, which we recite every evening, affirm God's promises and faithfulness: "You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation." I'm very grateful to have been a part of this new emerging generation and know that God has beautiful things in store.

My family and I are filled with gratitude at the opportunity to call Richmond Hill home for the past two and a half years.

> Rev. Katie Heishman, Richmond Hill's Former Co-Pastoral Director

Welcome Tom Baynham

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR

Tstill remember my mother warning **⊥**my sister and I to avoid being in Church Hill after dark. Now, some fifty years later, not only do I work and live in Church

Hill, but I live an eight



minute walk (four minute drive) from my daughter, son-in-law, and their two children. God's movement in our lives is often always unexpected, yet it has always included a return home. This sacred place known as Richmond Hill holds many precious memories of worship, welcome, and hospitality for me. It was in this space in 1994 that I experienced the presence and movement of God during an Emmaus walk. It is my prayer and desire that as I begin this new area and focus of ministry here at Richmond Hill that visitors will encounter the "unexpected movement" of God as well as the presence of God's "extravagant hospitality and welcome" through the staff, team, and volunteers of this sacred ground... Richmond Hill. Blessings!.

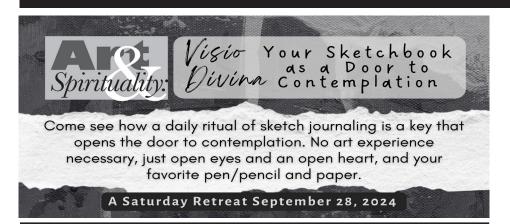
Welcome Sylvia King

Ruah Dean

Cylvia King has spent Oover 20+ years, working and journeying with others through ministry as a Pastor, SOZO Christian healing prayer, and RUAH spiritual direc-



tion. Her passion has always been to "clear the path" of those going before her, beside her, or coming after her. The Divine has allowed her to "clear the path" in many ways. Knowing that one size does not fit all. He used the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Direction; Heart Longings: An invitation to the Contemplative Path; and Spiritual Formation: A Seminar on Contemplative Leadership, to broaden and strengthen her. It brings her joy to draw and paint all that Divine has created, to play her bass guitar and belt out a melody, and to laugh and sing with her grandchildren.



A 24-HR RETREAT OCTOBER 11-12, 2024

Delve into the rich tapestry of history, resilience, and transformation embodied in Richmond's historic Church Hill district with Cathy Woodson and Dr. Lauranett Lee.

Suggested donation: \$125

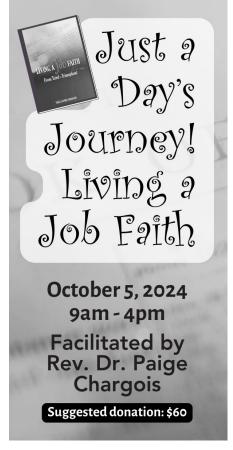






To register, visit our website or call the office at (804) 783-7903 or email Sheryl Johnson at sjohnson@richmondhillva.org





2024 Finishing Story

ith heartfelt gratitude and celebration, the program expresses deep appreciation for everyone who supported, prayed, mentored, facilitated, and financially contributed to our success. With standing-room-only attendance, the Awards and Closing Ceremony highlighted our year-end. Students were recognized for completing a stellar year, and thirteen graduates were celebrated for preparedness for college, the workforce, and the military. They received medals, certificates of completion, senior gift bags, and book scholarships. Additionally, several graduates were announced as recipients of a 2024 College Shower.

The showers are hosted by one of our devoted sponsors for this year. (First Presbyterian Church, State Council of Higher Education of VA, Fourth Baptist Church, Rev. Kelvin and Dr. Danni Greene, Cynthia King, and Hunton Andrews Kurth LLC.) Sponsors provide college-bound students with items to furnish their dorm rooms, other essentials, and laptops at these special events. This is an important element in making the dream of attending college a reality. Kudos to Xavier Rawl, who received the 2024 Rev. Janie Walker Leadership Spirit Award for outstanding team leadership. Naomi Loftin and Ontario Logan Patterson were recognized with the Resilience Award.

Our newest endeavor this summer, The Cultural History Immersion Project (C.H.I.P.), is a unique and comprehensive initiative designed to educate and empower youth, particularly those from communities impacted by the legacy of enslavement in America. The project emphasizes a holistic approach to youth development





through education, cultural immersion, career exploration, and community engagement. This includes visits

> to historically significant sites such as The Dwelling at Richmond Hill, Tuckahoe Plantation, The

International Civil Rights Center, Museum in Greensboro, NC, The King Center in Georgia, the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration and the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park in Montgomery, and Pettus Bridge and The National Voting Rights Museum in Selma, AL. The initiative reflects a strong commitment to empowering future

leaders through education, cultural understanding, and community involvement, ensuring a lasting and meaningful impact on the participants and their communities. Special thanks to the project sponsors (NextUpR-VA, VCU Health Hub, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chris and Denise Yates, Lydia Mercado, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, and Double Good Popcorn supporters) and Project Chaperones and Contributors: Dantavius Ballou, Ejana Bennett, Jocelyn Blount, Jacqueline Blount, Kristin Smith, Kole Smith, Dr. Laurnette Lee, Loria King, Ben Hadley Goggin and Bro. George Brown).

We ARE our Ancestors' Wildest Dreams, Creating and Spreading Kindness, Gratitude, Peace, and Belonging.

GRATEFUL BEYOND MEASURE,

Yvette Davis Rajput, Executive Director Marvin Roane, Asst. Director

Accepting donations to further expand the work of the Armstrong Leadership Program: https://secure.givelively.org/donate/richmond-hill/ armstrong-leadership-program

Are you interested in mentoring a young leader? Contact Us at alp@richmondhillva.org



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METRO RICHMOND AT PRAYER

metroprayrva.org

September 2024

Pray for Schools and Educational Institutions of Metropolitan Richmond.

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children. (Deuteronomy 4:9 NRSV)

September 1, 2024. We pray for the schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all superintendents, school boards, school administrators, PTAs, teachers, students, and staff.

September 8, 2024. We pray for the schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For all public, private, and religious schools. For students, teachers, and support personnel, including cafeteria workers, building and grounds staff, and school bus drivers. For all preschools and daycare centers and for children in home schools.

September 15, 2024. We pray for the 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 22, 2024. We pray for the schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For healthy relationships between parents, teachers, and students. For cooperation between Superintendents, School Boards, and Administrators of public and private schools throughout this metropolitan city.

September 29, 2024. We pray for the schools and educational institutions of Metropolitan Richmond: For curriculum that is grounded in truth and meaning. For space to nourish the creative seed in both teachers and students.t employment to make healthy family life possible.

Pray for Public, Non-profit, and Religious Social Service Work and Ministries in Metropolitan Richmond.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. (Matthew 25:35-36 NRSV)

October 6, 2024. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all in need of social services, all social service departments and caseworkers. For partnerships between the church and other institutions serving the needy.

October 13, 2024. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all in need of mental health services, all mental health workers, counselors, and treatment facilities.

October 20, 2024. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For all who suffer from addiction, dependency or co-dependency of any sort; for twelve-step programs, recovery programs, therapists, and addiction counselors. For advocates who provide a voice for the rights of persons whose voices are not heard.

October 27, 2024. We pray for public, non-profit, and religious social service work and ministries in Metropolitan Richmond: For emergency shelters, women's shelters, clinics, and feeding programs. For recreation programs, youth programs, juvenile counseling, and young people's shelters.

THE MICAH INITIATIVE

Continuing Our Legacy

hy Micah? Since joining
Richmond Hill over a year
ago, I've been exploring this
question. Though it might seem like a
challenge to traditions—a "Millennial,
knee-jerk" inquiry—my aim is to understand Micah's significance and future.



Micah

This journey has introduced me to inspiring individuals like Lynn Pappas.

Lynn, with her church, First Unitarian, volunteers at Cardinal Elementary, which has a high percentage of English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Lynn's dedication exemplifies how consistency, compassion, and community can profoundly impact students. Cardinal's student body is largely Hispanic, many from non-English-speaking homes. Despite academic struggles, these students find support through mentors like Lynn.

Each week, rain or shine, Lynn reads to her students, offering more than academic help—a stable, reassuring presence. Research shows that a caring, consistent adult can significantly boost a child's academic and emotional well-being. For students at Cardinal, Lynn's visits are a vital support system. The impact is evident: Micah students become more engaged, confident, and successful. Mentors, in turn, experience personal enrichment and a stronger community connection.

So, why Micah? Micah's leadership, including Lynn, spent a year exploring this question. We aimed to align with the Spirit's guidance to support struggling students and identify necessary changes. After gathering feedback from students, teachers, parents, and CIS Coordinators, we created the Micah Club. This idea was presented to Communities in Schools and Richmond Public Schools (RPS), leading us to pilot the program at Redd Elementary and Southampton Elementary.

What is the Micah Club? Building on our tradition of weekly mentoring, the Micah Club is an in-school program designed to foster community and reinforce goals. In addition to ongoing mentoring, the club will organize quarterly gatherings for mentors and mentees. These meetings will offer opportunities for reciprocal support: mentors helping mentees, mentees supporting each other, and mentors encouraging one another. This approach aims to enhance relationships and amplify our impact.

This is a critical time for the Micah Initiative. We need support to sustain our programs. Securing additional resources by March is essential. Your support—through donations, volunteering, or advocacy—can make a difference. Together, we can ensure every child in Richmond has the chance to thrive.

For more information and updates, visit micahrva.org and subscribe to the Micah Minute, arriving most Fridays.

Andrew Schwartz Micah Coorinator

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Fall 2024

Metro Richmond at Prayer metroprayrva.org

In September: *Pray for Schools and Educational Institutions of Metropolitan Richmond.*

...and in October: Pray for Public, Non-profit, and Religious Social Service Work and Ministries 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.





