



RIVER ROAD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
loving people to life

Connections
April 2023

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**March/April
Upper Room
Devotionals are
available outside
the keypad door.**

THE UPPER ROOM
DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Starting off with Easter

A middle school student asked me recently at church “when is Easter this year?” I said, “April 9th.” The student exclaimed, “GREAT, we get to start off with Easter!” “What do you mean,” I asked? “Well when it comes to holidays it is always hard to wait the entire month for them to occur. My birthday is on the 28th, Christmas is on the 25th, Halloween on the 31st, and Easter well it tends to move around, so I am glad that we can start April off with Easter!”

Their excitement (and understandable delight at the ‘not having to wait’ for the celebration) about starting off the month with Easter made me recognize how Easter is our starting place as people of faith. We begin in the resurrection hope that Jesus offers. We begin every day in the truth that God will give us the strength and the wisdom to walk in the ways of Christ beyond our own capabilities and insights. And especially this Lent, after focusing on the last 24 hours of Jesus’ life and spending elongated time in the painful aspects of Jesus’ life and death that culminated on Good Friday, standing in the Easter Hope feels particularly poignant and blessed.

Where do you need to start with Easter in your life? Where do you need to hear again and trust anew that the same power that raised Jesus to life can speak into your life too? Is it into attitudes of cynicism or negativity that need a fresh wave of positivity? Is it into a fractured relationship that needs mending? Is it into your faith that has become stale or stalled? Where do you need to trust that God can roll the stone away in your own life and work a miracle?

As we move into this post-Easter season, I challenge each of us to start every day with Easter. To wake up every morning and pray this prayer:

God, on Easter morning you rolled away the stone and raised Jesus to new life.

Speak your new life into mine.

Help me to see your possibilities and trust in your will. In the name of the Risen Christ, Amen.

Starting with Easter,

Pastor Darcey

Our Lenten Series Theme is

The Day That Changed Everything

April 2	Palm Sunday
April 6	Maundy Thursday 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall
April 7	Good Friday 6:30pm in the Sanctuary
April 9	Easter
April 16	Rise Against Hunger - one united service

Schedule:

9AM - breakfast and also help with set up
 9:45AM - short worship service
 10AM - Rise coordinator gives instructions for packing the meals
 12PM - Finish the packing and clean up and start lunch

April Birthdays

April 1

Janey Campbell
Grant Clarke
Bridget Wood

April 4

James Cather

April 5

Molly Banta

April 6

Andrea Franklin

April 7

Michael Moosally

April 8

Kay Quagliano

April 9

Becki Mann
Brian Blevins

April 11

Jimmy Dameron

April 12

Joan Peterson
Rory Buchholz

April 13

Anne Grayson Craig
Aubrey Cosby

April 14

Justin Jagnarian

April 15

Bill Bell

April 16

Stacy Wood

April 17

Sean Conner

April 18

Robert Best
Steve King
Maria Thomas

April 21

Stephen Rhodes
Amy King

April 22

Linda Vines
Jordan Harless

April 23

Michael Thomas
Matt Benson

April 24

Gerould Ward
Harold Clarke
Eddie Clark
Alyssa Cather
Will York

April 27

Chip Mann
Karen Duer-Potts

April 28

Buddy Hiatt

April 29

Douglas Peterson
Anne Colvin





get engaged



Adults ages 50 and up are invited to join us for our April River of Lifers' trip to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden on Tuesday, April 18 (rain date: April 25). We will enjoy a self-guided tour of the garden and stay for lunch at the Garden Café. You can join us for the entire event, or just meet us for lunch.

Here are your options:

Meet at RRUMC at 9:30am to ride the bus or carpool.

Meet at Lewis Ginter at 10:00am to tour the garden.

Meet at the Garden Café at Lewis Ginter at 11:45am for lunch.

Cost: Admission \$14 (adults 65+) + lunch

RSVP to Lori Alford at engagement@riverroadumc.org or 740-7061.

New Prayer Space opens Sunday, April 23rd!

Our Prayer Ministry Team is excited to announce the launching of our Sunday morning Prayer Space on Sunday, April 23rd. The chapel (located behind the sanctuary) will be open from 10:00-11:00am. All are welcome to use this space for quiet prayer, a place to kneel or light candles, or share written prayer requests with our prayer team. Prayer Partners will be available to welcome you and support you as you pray.

If you are interested in serving as a Prayer Partner, please contact Lori Alford at 740-7061 or engagement@riverroadumc.org for more information.

Easter Treats and Photo Op

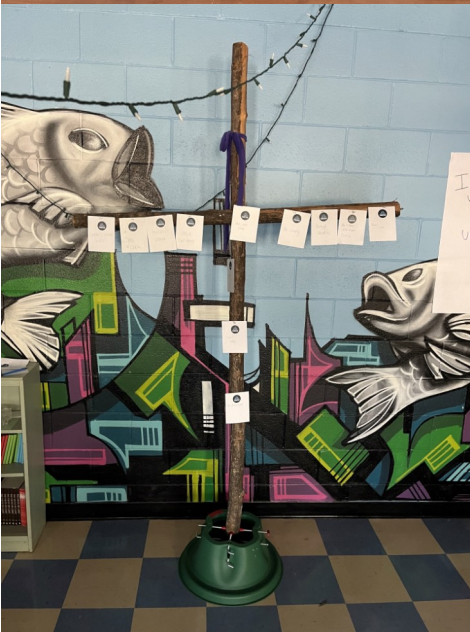
On Easter Sunday, April 9 be sure to drop by the Welcome Center for coffee and breakfast treats. Volunteers will also be available to take your photo in the courtyard following both worship services—just bring your phone or camera.



Join us Sunday at 5:30! Lots of opportunities to plug in as a Youth at River Road!



Good to have friends from other UMC groups join us



Lots of Prayers on the Cross



ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Thank you to those offering to help lead our discussions during our Lenten Season - Bob Wilson, Randy Reaves, Jamie Breeden, Kathleen Fulton and Jon Francisco! We continue to dive deeper into our Sunday message, working to form new groups after Easter. Building from the message on Sunday, we have additional resources, questions and media to build from. Reach out to Tom if interested in new learning opportunities.

Blessings,
Tom York

Join us Sunday mornings!

River Road Kids Discipleship Hour will be at 10 AM in the Sunday School wing and Children's Church will be held at the 9 & 11 AM worship services in the Sunday School wing.

Preschool Discipleship for April:

1, 2, 3... it's Easter! And we are SO excited to share with our youngest friends that Jesus is alive! We want our preschoolers to know that Jesus isn't just a character in stories. Jesus is alive, and He wants to be their friend forever! This month, we are sharing the most important event in history with our preschoolers. Jesus changed the world, and He still has the power to change people's lives today. Why? Because Jesus is alive!

Memory Verse for April:

"I AM ALIVE FOR EVER AND EVER!"

REVELATION 1:18, NIV

K-5 Discipleship for April:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMILITY AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN
THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

We live in a "me-centered" world, where people act as if the world revolves around them. It can be hard to figure out how to be humble throughout the different circumstances we face. Thankfully, we don't have to figure this out on our own. When Jesus was on earth, He gave us the ultimate example of humility. Jesus is God, and He put that aside for us. Through His life and death, Jesus also showed us how to serve others and put them first.

Memory Verse For April:

"DON'T DO ANYTHING ONLY TO GET AHEAD. DON'T DO IT BECAUSE YOU ARE PROUD. INSTEAD, BE HUMBLE. VALUE OTHERS MORE THAN YOURSELVES."

PHILIPPIANS 2:3, NIRV



FRANCIS ALLEN/Alice Weed Circle

We'd love to have you join us for the Frances Allen/Alice Weed Circle meeting at church on Tuesday, April 10th at 10:00 AM in room 205/207. You can find spiritual inspiration, good fellowship and many opportunities for service! At the April meeting, after our program, we will be considering various opportunities and ways to support local missions and also planning our annual May 9th Preschool and Church Staff Salad Luncheon. The April outreach project will be assembling 20 Hygiene Kits to be donated to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). Each Hygiene Kit contains "basic necessities for those who are most vulnerable during times of crisis". March Circle attendees have already signed up to donate the necessary items, but we can use help assembling the kits on April 10th.



United
Women
in Faith

UPDATE: The overflowing shopping bags of Circle members' donations for the new UMFS campus store have been delivered and the Caring Closet staff members were so thrilled and thankful! Hopefully, the residential students will find items in the store that bring them joy! Thanks, everyone. UWF motto: "FAITH*HOPE*LOVE in Action"

BOOK CLUB

The first Monday Book Club meets at 7PM, 2800 Chancel Lane, home of Ann York, 907-748-0446. On April 3 our group will discuss the book, The Many Daughters of Afong Moy. On May 1, we will discuss West With Giraffe by Lynda Rutledge. Everyone is welcome. All you have to do is tell Ann you are interested or call her, and it is a done deal! Hope to see you all then, and keep reading!! So many books, so little time.

The Second Monday Book Club will meet April 10 to discuss The Soul of an Octopus, written by Sy Montgomery and presented by Terri. May 8, we will meet to discuss The Good Left Undone by Adriana Trigiani presented by Bess

This club, which has been in existence for three years, welcomes you at 11129 Woodbaron Court. I can be reached at 804-402-7494 for further questions. email address, besstraylor@verizon.net.

Please come by for the gathering and reviews.

CREATION CARE

Preamble: Newsletter written monthly to guide our commitment to care for God's Creation (and **all** of God's people and creatures). "The Lord God took humans and put him them the garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15).

Things to be thankful for: A) "New limit to toxic 'forever chemicals'" (RTD, 3/15, p. A 14); B) Representatives of 70 nations along with oil companies and major shipping lines have agreed in principle on a plan to stabilize oceans, limit exploitation and preserve habitats" (RTD, 3/14, p. A 9); C) Most discarded clothing ends up as waste. But businesses are ramping up to recycle more of it into new, high-quality fashion. D) "Oyster numbers on rise in Virginia" (RTD, 3/5, p. A 1); E) "Henrico breaks ground on 99-acre . . . community park . . . in Sandston" (RTD. 2/28, p. A3).

Things to be concerned about: A) "We're up to our eyeballs in plastic. . . . Pollution skyrockets as assembly tables environmental bills." (RTD, 3/6, p. A 1); B) Plasticosis (i.e. plastic-induced fibrosis) has been described in the Journal of Hazardous Materials as a newly-identified disease created by consumed plastic (or micro-plastics, which are now ubiquitously present in the environment); C) "Conservation areas are short on insect habitats. . . . 76 percent: the proportion of insects that aren't well protected by Conservation areas. . . . That's a problem because the world's insect population is plummeting" (Science News, 3/11, p. 5).

EASTER OFFERING

The Easter offering funds our church's missions projects throughout the year. Your generosity will help determine the scope of the missions outreach to the community this year – local, state, national, and international. In recent years, with God's help and yours, we have been able to expand our missions activities. We are blessed by the congregational support and look forward to seeing where God and the congregation are leading us in 2023.

APRIL MISSIONS EVENTS

On **April 16** we will be packing 20,000 meals for **Rise Against Hunger**. Worship will be included! Breakfast will be provided by the missions committee, as will fried chicken for lunch. Bring a dish to share for lunch following our completion of the packing. If you haven't experienced this event, you have a treat in store. Join us for this fun event with roles for the entire family. Watch for detailed information by email and on the app.

On **April 29**, we will join **Rebuilding Together** to repair homes for homeowners unable to do the repairs and upkeep necessary to remain safely in their homes. Whatever your skills, there is a role for you in this day long project. We will be working on two homes and have ace team captains in place. Our work helps rebuild and retain community in local neighborhoods. If interested in volunteering, contact Randy Reaves, randalreaves@verizon.net.

ONGOING NEEDS - FOOD PANTRIES

The demand for food at our food pantry partners and for residents of the shelter at Safe Harbor continues. As recently documented by the Richmond Times Dispatch, food insecurity today is matching that at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most-needed items remain peanut butter; tomato sauce in 15 oz. cans; 1 lb. spaghetti noodles; canned fruit and vegetables; canned soups and beans; canned chicken and tuna; ravioli/spaghettios; boxed cereal; oatmeal; non-refrigerated microwave meals; diapers (sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most needed); and wipes. Standard container sizes are appreciated for packing purposes and no glass containers. Weekly updates will highlight particular needs. We also need additional volunteers for our food pantry mission. If you are interested in exploring whether God is calling you to help, reach out to Ann Hodges.

HIGHLAND SUPPORT PROJECT MISSIONS TRIPS

The Highland Support Project, founded and operated by our own Ben Blevins and Guadalupe Ramirez, has several summer missions trips. There is a young adult trip in June to Guatemala and two trips to Arizona, also in late June. For more information, email hello@highlandpartners.org.

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Hebrews 13:16.

Thanks be to God for leading us to love our neighbors. For more missions information, contact Ann Hodges, ahodges@richmond.edu or 804-339-9440.

CREATION CARE—continued

Things to do: A) Consider a plan to open up and clean up the Chesapeake . . . that would make the bay part of the National Park System. B) Reduce or eliminate plastic wrap with reusable containers and/or stretchy silicon covers. C) Commit to the 6 Rs (i.e., Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rent, Recycle and Rot (i.e., Compost)

Respectfully submitted, Michael j Wriston, Chair, Earth Advocacy Committee (River Road United Methodist Church).



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April 2023

Articles for the
May 2023
Connections are due
April 20, 2023.



We're on the web at
www.riverroadumc.org

CALLING ALL GRADUATES:

We will be recognizing our graduates on Sunday, May 21. Please send the names of high school, college and graduate program graduates who are part of River Road UMC to Eva at eva@riverroadumc.org by **May 1!**

Include the school they are graduating from, along with the college they will attend (for high school graduates) and their degree (for college graduates).



OPEN ARMS
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Helping children grow with open hearts, open minds and open arms.

We've been having a great time in Preschool during the month of March, learning all about the SPRING season and how God has blessed us! The Preschool Children had a chance to attend a field trip to the Richmond Metro Zoo in March. They learned about some of the different animals that God created. They even got to feed the animals and saw the baby goats and sheep. What a wonderful experience it was for all of the children and families to partake in this special trip together with their classmates and school!



OACP is in open registration for the 2023-2024 school year. There are currently open spots in the Pre-Kindergarten Program for the 2023-2024 school year. All other classrooms are full, but we are accepting waitlist applications. OACP is also hiring for a Full-Time Assistant Teacher beginning Summer 2023. If you or any of your family and friends are interested in the open position or in enrolling a child at OACP, please contact the Preschool Director, Nora Hamlet, at 804-754-0227 or email her at openarms@riverroadumc.org.