



Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Birthdays | 2 |
| River of Lifers and Small Groups | 3 |
| Youth & Discipleship | 4 |
| Children | 5 |
| Christian Women in Action & River Road 101 | 6 |
| Missions & Book Clubs | 7 |
| Easter Egg Hunt & Open Arms | 8 |
| Christian Preschool | |

Spiritual disciplines changed my life. Many years ago I had a lull in my spiritual growth. I went to church regularly and felt inspired by worship but by Tuesday morning those feelings had faded. I talked to a Christian friend about my ennui. She recommended that I read the book *Celebration of Discipline*. Actually she did more than recommend the book, she called me regularly to discuss different chapters and share her own experiences putting the concepts into practice. At first, I was skeptical. I am a creative thinker who shys away from routine. The word “discipline” worried me. With her encouragement, I took the leap and started part one of the book, “The Inward Disciplines.” When I read the title of the first chapter, “Meditation.” I was ready to give up on the book. I had tried for months to hear God. How is meditating and sitting alone in silence going to help me hear God? Richard Foster taught me that I had been looking at my prayer life all wrong. I had been praying like I was writing request letters to God. I had not been listening or expecting a response so that was why I was not hearing anything. Richard Foster wrote this, “What happens in meditation is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart.” This was my aha! I had been filling all of my time with schedules and lists. I had been filling all my silence with talking or podcasts. I had filled all of my space with something so that I did not have space in my life to allow Christ the time and attention to work on my heart. I kept reading the book, attending worship, and talking to my friend and the light of Christ started to shine brighter and brighter in my daily life. I still ebb and flow in my practice of spiritual disciplines, but now I know when my faith life starts to seem stale, these practices are where I turn first. Jesus always meets me when I make space to be present with him. This month we begin Lent, a time to turn our focus toward the cross and to make space in our lives for our Savior to keep building that inner sanctuary in our hearts. Now it’s my turn to pay it forward. Will you let me be your friend who recommends you read this book?

Holy Habits, 5 weeks, led by Pastor Sarah Sealand

Begins Wednesday, February 28 at 10:00am in person or 7:00pm on Zoom

Discover timeless disciplines to enrich your spiritual life.

Recommended book: \$14.

Sign up here: [Holy Habits Small Group](#) or in the Welcome Center.

January/February
Upper Room
Devotionals are
available outside
the keypad door.
You can also
access them online
by [clicking here](#).



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

February 13th at 6 pm

Pancakes, sausage & fruit

Donations accepted for our food pantry ministry



Ash Wednesday



ashes to go
Just drive up to the Grand Staircase to receive ashes on your way.
7:45am - 9:00am

a service of worship
February 14th, 6:30pm
in the Fellowship Hall

Explore these suggested resources to enhance your Lenten journey:

Free digital devotionals:

[40 Daily Devotionals for Lent](#) from bible.com

Also available on The Bible app

[Bless the Lent We Actually Have](#) from katebowler.com

Free download by Kate Bowler

Books worth reading:

- *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* by Richard Foster
- *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* by Henri Nouwen
- *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* by Tish Harrison Warren

February Birthdays

February 1

Delaney Weston
Reid Weston

February 6

Juane Alexander
Amanda Jagnarian
Abraham Rhodes

February 7

Alicia Talley

February 8

Jimmy Benson

February 9

Danny Barrett
Khasara Dye
Temple Barrett

February 10

Gib Seese
Ben Blevins

February 12

Bernard Fuemmeler

February 15

Ed White
Kathleen Fulton
Brandon Oubre

February 16

Ina Mae James
Beverly Morrison

February 19

Stephanie O'Neill

February 20

Ellen Reaves

February 23

Emileigh Benson
Josh Neighbors

February 24

Lupe Blevins
Patty Willis
Martha Hotinger

February 26

Daisy Banta
George Eapen

February 27

Leslie Gayne

February 28

John Honea





Adults in the more mature category [50+] are invited to join in our next adventure. We will be touring the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site in Richmond on Tuesday, February 20th. The tour is free.

Meet at River Road UMC at 9:15am to carpool downtown. Afterwards we will enjoy lunch at Shorty's Diner on Broad Street.

SMALL GROUPS

NEW groups forming in February:

Hey God, It's Me... Again!?, 4 weeks, led by Rhoda Howell and Laura Fanizza

Begins February 18, Sundays at 10:00am in Room 201/202

Rooted in prayers found in scripture, we'll learn from each other, sharing tips and techniques to boost our prayer life.

Sign up here: [Hey God Small Group](#) or in the Welcome Center.

Holy Habits, 5 weeks, led by Pastor Sarah Sealand

Begins Wednesday, February 28 at 10:00am in person in Room 205/207 or 7:00pm on Zoom

Discover timeless disciplines to enrich your spiritual life.

Recommended book: \$14.

Sign up here: [Holy Habits Small Group](#) or in the Welcome Center.

Ongoing Groups:

Contemporary Christian Class, Sundays at 10:00am in Room 205/207,
led by Randy Reaves

Adult Bible Studies, Sundays at 10:00am in Room 206, led by Jon Francisco

Christian Women in Action, 2nd Tuesdays at 10:00am in Room 205/207

Prayer & Praise Healing Service, Thursdays at 10:00am in the chapel

For more information or to offer your suggestions for new small groups,
contact Lori Alford at engagement@riverroadumc.org or 740-7061.

YOUTH

Youth are looking forward to 2024! We have plenty of opportunities to engage and hope any of your 6-12th graders can join us.

Youth Group, Sunday at 6:00

Youth Sunday School, Sunday at 10:00

Small group studies during the week based on youth schedules!



Join us for Sunday School!



A good time at the Christmas Party!

Visiting and Caroling with Church Members!



THANK YOU church family for all the cards and support and comfort you gave Randy and me and our whole family when my mom, Lucy Cardwell, died. It was more than I ever imagined. Most of all I thank you for being so kind to my mom. She loved church, church music, church friends and learning where everybody was from. One of the best things in her life was that her last 12 years were among you. She loved you. I am so thankful. And a big thank you to those who prepared the reception - setting up, bringing food and beautiful flowers - because it was something special and we felt so loved and supported to be all together.



Love, Ellen Reaves

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Join us Sunday mornings!

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

Preschool Discipleship for February:

There is a food truck for just about every kind of food, and when the food trucks are lined up, the whole community comes out. Some people like noodles. Some people like tacos. Some people like hot dogs. And others head straight for the funnel cakes! Next time you see a row of food trucks look around at all the people in line. Take time to thank Jesus because Jesus loves everyone. Jesus loves the sour as well as the sweet; the spicy as well as the mild; the simple as well as the complicated; your favorites and your not-so-favorites. Jesus loves everyone!

Memory Verse for February:

“BE KIND AND LOVING TO EACH OTHER.”

EPHESIANS 4:32, NCV

K-5 Discipleship for February:

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

God showed kindness by sending Jesus for us—even when we didn't deserve it. Because of God's love for us, we can be kind to everyone. Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit. And when you show kindness to others, you give them a glimpse into the heart of God, and how much God loves them. Kindness should be a characteristic of people who follow Jesus. Not only did Jesus model kindness, but He also commanded it. He taught us to treat others the way we want to be treated.

Memory Verse For February:

“YOU ARE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE. YOU ARE HOLY AND DEARLY LOVED. SO PUT ON
TENDER MERCY AND KINDNESS AS IF THEY WERE YOUR CLOTHES. DON'T BE PROUD.
BE GENTLE AND PATIENT.”

COLOSSIANS 3:12, NIRV



On Tuesday, February 13th our new **Christian Women in Action** group will have the opportunity to TOUR and learn more about Little Hands of Virginia, a local nonprofit group that "provides a little extra love to children newborn to three years old in need in Central Virginia". In the Richmond region, 1 in 3 children are economically disadvantaged. Around 40% of the children in our city live below the poverty level. Since 2019, through donations from Little Hands, more than 5000 young children have received essential items to help them be clean, healthy and cared for. This extra support to the children and their families during the first years of their lives is an opportunity to improve outcomes down the road.

Here's the plan:

9:40AM Arrive at RRUMC if you wish to follow me and carpool or caravan over. Leave RRUMC by 9:45 or just meet us there.

10:00 AM Arrive at Little Hands of VA, 7101 Forest Hill Avenue, Richmond, VA 23225

10:15-10:30 Tour and learn about their program and needs and ways to help personally or as a group (EDUCATION)

10:30-11:15 Diaper Wrap Party! (SERVICE) They will have set up tables and chairs for us and we will help them by packaging 25 diapers at a time for their distribution. Doesn't that sound like fun?

11:15 -11:30 Wrap up visit and those wishing to stay for lunch together can walk/drive a short distance across the parking lot to Jason's Deli for lunch. (FELLOWSHIP)

Suggestions for before we go to Little Hands....IF YOU WISH.

Gather some items on their donation list to take with you when we go. Their list is quite extensive and many items are easy to get at a thrift store. There are some items which must be new, including their 9 most needed items: baby wipes, diaper cream, diapers N-7 and pull-ups, baby soap and lotion, disposable nursing pads, baby bottles, children's toothbrush & toothpaste, socks Newborn-5T, and nipple cream.

We are going to have handouts of items needed for us to refer to, for the congregation, and for any friends or family you wish to invite to donate items we can take with us when we go. There will be a crate outside the keypad door from the parking lot and a white table in the Missions Donation Room, both marked with signage, so anyone can leave items starting this Sunday and continuing through 2/13. If you go to their website, littlehandsva.org, you can go ahead and read the list and print a copy for yourself, or pick one up in the Welcome Center or the Narthex. One is titled "Donate Items" and another is "Donation Checklist". This is a great time to share about the work of this group and invite anyone interested to join us in this service project.

Location Note: Driving from church to the Little Hands of VA location takes about 10 minutes.

Any questions? Text or call Charlotte Allred at 804-305-5423



CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN ACTION
FELLOWSHIP | SERVICE | EDUCATION

RIVER ROAD 101

Are you new to the River Road UMC community? Interested in learning more about church membership? Connect with us at our next River Road 101! We'll enjoy lunch together while learning more about what it means to be part of our church family.

Sunday, February 25, 12:15pm
Room 205/207
Lunch provided

RSVP by Sunday, February 18 to Lori
at engagement@riverroadumc.org



GIFTS FOR THE MANGER

GFTM was extended until January 15. Thank you for your contributions to support these wonderful organizations loving people to life in Richmond and around the globe. Collectively you donated over \$10,000 through Gifts for the Manger for UMCOR, Virginia Supportive Housing, Helping Children Worldwide, and our local food pantries. We are blessed by your generosity to be able to support these missions.

ONGOING NEEDS - FOOD PANTRIES AND SAFE HARBOR

Thanks to those who made Gifts for the Manger contributions to the food pantry and to those who used the advent calendar to collect food gifts for January. Most-needed items remain the same -- peanut butter; 15 oz. cans of tomato sauce; 1 lb. spaghetti; canned fruit and vegetables; canned soups and beans; canned chicken and tuna; boxed cereal; oatmeal; ravioli/spaghettios; non-refrigerated microwave meals; diapers and wipes (sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most needed). Standard, non-glass container sizes are appreciated for packing purposes. Updates regarding particular items are on the app.

SOUP-ER BOWL SUNDAY FOOD COMPETITION

Yes, you read that right! It is time for our Soup-er Bowl Sunday food competition! Please bring pop top soup cans to the football field set up in Welcome Center. No need to wait until Super Bowl Sunday to make your donations. Donations will be accepted beginning January 21st. Any donations made prior to the team announcements will be evenly distributed. Once we know which teams are playing, the real competition will begin! Bring your cans and support your favorite team! All cans will be given to our food pantries.

“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 Laurel Via, laurel.via@richmond.edu or (276) 492-6795.

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| BOOK CLUBS |
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Daytime Meeting:

Second Monday Book Club will meet February 12 at 1:00 pm. Terry will review and discuss *Crow Mary* by Kathleen Grissom. The novel inspired by the real life of Crow Mary-an indigenous woman caught between two cultures in 19th century North America.

March 11, Brenda will introduce us to *The Kitchen House* by Kathleen Grissom. *This best selling author threatens to expose the best and worst in everyone tied to a thriving plantation before the Civil War. Classic must read novel.*

All are welcomed to 11129 Woodbaron Court to join our stimulating discussions at 1:00 pm. Call Bess at 804-747-7494 for questions, directions or suggestions. It is great to rest during the busy months ahead with a good book. Enjoy!

Evening Meeting:

On the first Monday of each month, Book Club meets at 7 PM at Ann York's home, 2800 Chancel Lane, 907-748-0446. February 5 is our next meeting and we will be discussing *Behind Closed Doors* by B. A. Paris. Marge Stewart will lead the discussion.

Our March 4 selection is *Sisters Under the Rising Sun* by Heather Morris. If anyone is interested, please call or catch me at church and I will add your name to the email list to remind you of the meeting...and then just show up and have a good time!



**RIVER ROAD
UNITED METHODIST**
LOVING PEOPLE TO LIFE

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Henrico VA 23229
Phone: 804-740-7061
Fax: 804-740-3367
Preschool: 754-0227

February 2024

**Articles for the
March 2024
Connections are due
February 20, 2024.**



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

SAVE THE DATE

RIVER ROAD ANNUAL EGGSTRAVAGANZA

SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD

11AM-1PM

DAY

FACE
PAINTING

PETTING
FARM

BOUNCE
HOUSE

DESSERT
WALK



Open Arms Christian Preschool

The winter season is upon us at OACP! The children started off the New Year, back to school, with some snowy and icy days! It made for great discussions and real life observations of the winter season with snow experiments, finding the icicles outside, making "snow men" and practicing some "ice skating" with their friends. Since we've had some mild winters the past few years, this was the first time many of the children had seen snow and the forming of icicles outside, since it was so cold! Their faces lit up when they realized the "real icicles" look like the pictures they saw in the books!



OACP is currently in the process of finalizing class enrollment for the 2024-2025 School Year. If you have friends or family that are interested in joining our preschool it's not too late! Please contact the Preschool Director, Nora Hamlet, at 804-754-0227, or email her at openarms@riverroadumc.org, for more information for the 2024-2025 school year.



OPEN ARMS
CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

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