



From Pastor Sarah

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

Years ago I did an exploration of happiness. I was trying to really understand what sustained happiness looked like. I read many books and talked to many people and of course, I prayed. Somewhere in that journey the phrase “choose joy” came into my being. It became a mantra for me. When folks around me were sharing gossip that put other people down, I chose joy. I chose to focus on the positive and speak up for the good things going on in the world. I turned off the negative messages the world was blaring at me, as best I could, and focused on the good. As I started to consciously choose joy, God changed me so that I could see it more easily. During that time of transformation I realized that happiness is an emotion whereas joy is a gift of the Spirit. I learned that happiness comes through laughter, hugs, celebrations, and a good day. All of those things last only a moment, but joy comes from a deeper place. Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and that means that Jesus and I are working together to produce joy. This joy that is produced then is not as fleeting as an emotion. Joy is what sustains our Christian faith.

All of these lessons came to mind recently as I was reflecting on my new habits during Lent. The Spirit brought me a new phrase, “seek hope.” I heard a person ask someone, “How do you stay so positive and happy every day?” and her answer was, “I seek hope every day. In every situation, I look for the light that is breaking through.” I chewed on that thought for a bit as I considered exploring hope this season. It occurred to me that this might be a bit easier because in every situation where we need to seek hope, we can look to Jesus. Easter is on the horizon and it gives us the gift of eternal hope. Even though this spring, the world all around us will cry out “hope,” we still need Jesus to transform our souls so that the message of hope goes deeper in us. We must seek the hope that will sustain us in life. The good news is that we do not do this work alone. In fact the one who does the work with us, Jesus, is also the one who gives us hope because of Easter. So let us make a habit of choosing joy and seeking hope during Lent. Let’s give room for the Spirit to transform us so that our happiness on Easter is not fleeting but is eternal.

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Holy Week



PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 24

Contemporary Service 9:00am

Traditional Service 11:00am

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28

6:30pm

GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 29

6:30pm

EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31

Contemporary Service 9:00am

Traditional Service 11:00am

Birthdays

March 1
Barb Abu-Jaber

March 2
Cathy Clark
Bill Gayne

March 4
Malinda Eastman

March 5
Joe Dailey

March 6
Judy Metz
Gabbie Rhodes
Sarah Rhodes

March 7
Janelle Graeter

March 8
Charlie Dameron

March 10
Barbara Gifford
Dakan Honea
Izzy Honea
Beth Stuckey

March 14
Becky Beattie
Pat Clark

March 15
Bob Sanford

March 18
Tom York Sr.
Meghan Grau

March 22
Carolyn McCracken

March 23
Catherine Conner

March 26
Starr Alexander

March 27
Martha Williams

March 28
Lori Alford

March 31
Jim Hotinger
Olivia Messer
Gene Waters





The Bridge

— YOUR TIME TO CONNECT —

Sundays at 10 am

Introducing “The Bridge” Sundays at 10:00am

The Bridge is your time to connect with your church community. That could include participating in an adult small group, warming up with the Sanctuary Choir, growing in faith with River Road Kids Connect, or having coffee and conversation in our Welcome Center.

However you choose to connect at 10:00am on Sundays, you belong here at River Road.

CHOOSE COMMUNITY

Connect with a small group during Lent:

Holy Habits

Wednesdays at 10:00am, Room 205/207
Or 7:00pm on Zoom
February 28—March 27

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

Sundays at 10:00am, Room 206
March 3—24

Brunchin’ Believers

1st & 3rd Sundays at 10:00am, Room 210
20–40 something young adults

Contemporary Christian Class

Sundays at 10:00am, Room 205/207

Prayer & Praise Healing Service

Thursdays at 10:00am in the chapel

For more information about how you can join a small group, contact Lori Alford at engagement@riverroadumc.org or 740-7061.

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH

The prayer of the daily Examen was developed by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in 1522. It remains a powerful form of prayer and self-reflection. Practice the Examen at the close of each day.

Prepare for prayer

Find a comfortable position. Begin with a few deep breaths to calm your heart and mind. Acknowledge the intent of this prayer: to grow closer with God.

Thanksgiving

Start by thanking God for the gifts of the day and anything you are grateful for.

Review

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see your day clearly. What stands out from your day? Particular emotions or events? Moments you felt close to God or noticed God working? Times you felt far from God and from who you are called to be?

Respond

What might God be telling you through your feelings and experiences from today? Ask forgiveness for the times you weren’t at your best. Offer up more gratitude for the blessings that stood out. Whatever comes to mind, talk with God about it.

Look to tomorrow

What are you excited for? What are you nervous about? Visualize yourself walking through the day with God and ask for God’s help.

Close

Spend a few more moments with God, listening for God and finding peace in God’s presence.

adapted from hallow.com

INVESTIGATE MY LIFE, O GOD, FIND OUT EVERYTHING ABOUT ME;
CROSS-EXAMINE AND TEST ME, GET A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT I'M ABOUT;
SEE FOR YOURSELF WHETHER I'VE DONE ANYTHING WRONG—
THEN GUIDE ME ON THE ROAD TO ETERNAL LIFE.

PSALM 139:23-24, THE MESSAGE

High School tubing with West End Circuit

Youth

Counting cans for the Souper Bowl



Marshmallow night for youth group

Youth Sunday school crew after the morning minute-to-win-it

River of Libers



River of Lifers
[adults 50+]
VIRGINIA MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS
Tuesday, March 19

Enjoy a specially-curated tour led by our own Sandy Irwin, followed by lunch at the museum cafe.

Meet at RRUMC at 9:15am to carpool. Tour begins at 10:00am.
RSVP to Lori Alford by March 17:
engagement@riverroadumc.org or
740-7061.

River Road Kids

Join us Sunday mornings!

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

Family Time Devotional

Waiting to be picked by a team in grade school is agonizing. If you're some of the last people chosen by a team, it means while everyone else is cheering "Go team!", you're probably thinking something like, "They don't want me, and I don't want to be here." The truth is, we don't all have the skills to hit home runs or run really fast. And that's okay. What's not okay is being unwanted. Thankfully, for all of us, Jesus wants everyone on His team! Jesus wants everyone everywhere to follow Him and be His friend forever. No matter what we can or can't do, what we have done, what we look like, or where we live, Jesus is alive and He wants to be our friend...forever! And that kind of Good News makes us all want to say, "GO TEAM!"

I have called you friends. John 15:15 NIV

K-5 Discipleship for March:

Throughout Scripture, we can see how peace is something near to God's heart. Even though people chose to break their relationship with God, God made a way to fix that relationship through Jesus. And because we reflect God's image, making peace with others should be a priority for us as well. That's why in March we will highlight some passages and stories about peace to help kids understand more about how they can be peacemakers in their world.

Memory Verse For March:

If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can.
Romans 12:18 NIRV



Women's Ministry

RRUMC WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Going forward, the existing and new small groups for women will be under this "umbrella". It will help organize what small groups for women are currently available at RRUMC. Be watching for the start-up of more opportunities for women. We are really excited for this new beginning. Watch for new fun activities and experiences that interest you. We look forward to you joining us. Let us know if you have an idea, suggestion or question. Contact Tammy Hacker at mngirlinva88@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN ACTION (CWA) – Fellowship/Service/Education
Woohoo, we have a name! The Women's Ministry 2.0 ladies have been working on a new name for the mission-focused women's group. At the January meeting, we went into the room as Women's Ministry 2.0 and came out as RRUMC's CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN ACTION (CWA). There is now this new avenue for women to grow in their faith and deepen friendships, while learning about needs in our community and ways of serving others. The responsibilities for monthly gatherings and event planning for this group will be shared by everyone. It will change each month, so no one has a heavy load. Thanks be to God for this incredible group of loving, open-minded, generous and friendly Christian women, each with a heart for serving others in the name of Jesus!



CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN ACTION
FELLOWSHIP | SERVICE | EDUCATION

CWA DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

(You are welcome to come to one or all of our small group gatherings. This isn't a membership thing! Come to whatever, whenever it interests you...and we'd love your ideas for monthly topic or activity.)

Tuesday, March 12, 10:00am - Bess Traylor has invited a representative from Mardi Bras VA to come speak with us. It is an initiative of the not-for-profit group, Into the Neighborhood, which connects people to organizations that serve women who are homeless, incarcerated and on a low/restricted income. Please bring NEW and gently used bras of any size, NEW underwear of any size, pads, tampons and pantyliners to this gathering. We will donate these to our speaker.

Tuesday, April 9 – Katherine Moore from Safe Harbor will give us information on this outstanding nonprofit.

Sunday, May 12 – Our Mother's Day Bake Sale will benefit Safe Harbor: Bess Traylor & Sari Eapen are contact ladies for this event.

Other Women's Activities

On the first Monday of each month, Book Club meets at 7:00pm at Ann York's home, 2800 Chancel Lane, 907-748-0446.

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!

Monthly Women's Breakfast - March 22 at 9:00am
at Silver Diner at 10890 West Broad St.

The Second Monday Book Club meets at 1:00pm at Bess Traylor's home. March 11 will be a presentation of *The Kitchen House* by Kathleen Grissom by Brenda. On April 8, Tammy's review of *The Radium Girls* by Kate Moore.

Please join us and become a member of this unique group. With our busy schedules, this is a time to relax, give your opinions of the reading materials, and suggest additional novels the group can read. We look forward to seeing you. Call Bess @ 804-402-7494 for more information.

Missions



SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION- Thank you to everyone who participated in this new mission. 319 cans of soup were donated--160 by Chiefs fans, 127 by 49ers fans, and 32 into the general collection. These cans will be distributed to our food pantries.

UPCOMING MISSIONS

Mark your calendars for Rise Against Hunger, which will be held on Sunday, April 7. Breakfast will be served from 9:00 to 9:45 followed by a short worship service. We will begin packing meals at 10:00 and continue to 12:00. Lunch will be served at noon. There are opportunities for the entire family to participate.

Also mark your calendars for Rebuilding Together, which will take place Saturday, April 27th. All are welcome. If you're interested in volunteering or have any questions, please contact Randy Reaves at randalreaves@verizon.net.

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.

ANNUAL RIVER ROAD EASTER EGG HUNT

SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD

FACE
PAINTING

11AM - 1PM
HUNT BEGINS PROMPTLY
AT 11:30AM

DESSERT
WALK

BALLOON
ANIMALS

PETTING
FARM

BOUNCE
HOUSE

OVER 5000
EGGS!!!



Church Grounds Clean Up Day!

Did you know that our congregation does most of the work to take care of our church grounds? While we pay to have the mowing done and some large trees tended, all the other work is done by US. Twice a year we ask for a group of volunteers to meet on a Saturday for just 3 hours and we trim, weed, edge, and mulch! Between these two big weekend clean-ups, individuals take care of smaller pieces of the grounds when they can make the time. So, if you see something that needs doing and are willing and able, let Kate Meilink know and she will happily add you to the list of volunteers! New helpers are always welcomed!

- Church grounds spring clean-up day will be Saturday, March 16 from 9:00 - 12:00.
- Let's show our beautiful church grounds some love and get them ready for the spring flowers to bloom and Easter to arrive.
- Snacks will be provided! You can bring your favorite tool(s) or use ours, bring a water bottle and your enthusiasm.

Feel free to come for just part of the day if that works for your schedule (or your back!) and know there will be tasks designed for everyone and every ability. Credit for service hours for youth will be given. If you plan to make it, please email Kate Meilink at meilinkk@gmail.com so we can better plan, but know that if you don't RSVP, you are certainly welcome to join us!



We've had a fun filled year at Open Arms Christian Preschool. The children have a few more months of the school year, and everyone is engaging in lots of fun activities! In February, the children were all FILLED with love and spreading kindness (just like they do all the time)! They learned about how to be kind and love their friends, families, and God! It was a month filled with many birthday celebrations and sharing valentines. During the month of March, the children will be visiting the Richmond Metro Zoo during our annual Spring Family Field Trip. It's always a fun time going to the zoo and seeing all the animals. The week before Easter we have "Holy Week" lessons with children, and build the excitement, along with anticipation, of the resurrection of Christ. Easter is always a special time for us as we teach our young disciples.

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.

