



RIVER ROAD CHURCH
BAPTIST



Ministry in times like these call for us to Be The Church...

2

Advent & Christmas

A preview of our Advent & Christmas events

3

TFC-Adults

A look back at our fall programs

4

Organ Interlude Series

Musical opportunities with virtual concerts

5

Children & Youth Ministries

How we're ministering to our children and youth

7

Missions Offerings

Thank you for your generous gifts

RIVER ROAD CHURCH

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 | VOL. IX | ISSUE 6

explorer

Inside the Explorer

Page 3

Stewardship Update

Page 4

Preschool Fun and Joy

Page 6

Care of Self and Others during a COVID Holiday Season

Page 7

Missions Ministry Updates

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

*Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done,
in whom this world rejoices.*

The words above begin one of my favorite hymns. Written nearly 375 years ago, Johann Crüger captures for me not only to whom we are thankful (our God) but why we are thankful (for the wondrous things God has done).

If you look around you today, thanksgiving and gratitude are in short supply. Now that's understandable, I suppose. Among other things, a contentious election season and a deadly pandemic have caused thanksgiving and gratefulness to be scarce.

In spite of all the terrible news around us, we have reason to be thankful; we have reason to rejoice. For people of faith, our thanksgiving comes from knowing that Jesus Christ is Emmanuel: God with us—always.

Even though there is so much that is not right with this world, even though sometimes it seems that there is more death than life, our souls can't help themselves. In spite of it all, we offer our thanksgiving to God because we know something that this world does not yet know—that everything is not up to us, failure is not the end, and Jesus will not let death and destruction have the last word. For that, we can't help but sing our thanksgiving to God.

*All praise and thanks to God,
who reigns in highest heaven,
to Father and to Son
and Spirit now be given:
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore,
the God who was, and is,
and shall be evermore.*

Daniel

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT RIVER ROAD

Starlight: A Blue Christmas Service

Traditionally, we offer a special time of worship, reflection, and communion to remember loved ones we have lost during the year or perhaps in recent years. Approaching the holiday season without that person present can be daunting, sad, and overwhelming. This year, an opportunity will be available for that purpose. This year, acknowledging loss and sadness has taken on new meaning due to the pandemic.

You may need a Blue Christmas service to help you grieve or contend with any number of things. What have you lost this year that was supposed to be meaningful? What, in this COVID-19-focused year, do you need to give attention to as a real grief? What will be different about the holidays because of quarantine, reduced travels, or other reasons?

Admitting our sadness, struggle, and need for healing and hope is a healthy step. Coming together before God to confess our needs and receive God's nourishment can be deeply meaningful. Remembering we are all one in Christ, and that God comes to us where we are can provide hope and peace. Maybe you need that right now.

On Wednesday night, December 9, at 7:00 p.m. we will have an online service, just as we do on Sunday morning. You may go to rrcb.org/live, and join the service. You are encouraged to be present if you have any reasons you are approaching the holidays with angst, pain, fear, or dread, or to encourage others who are feeling these emotions. May this service of worship be a blessing, a balm on any wound, for you.

Following the service, you may gather with others on a live Zoom follow up conversation where we can offer listening ears, warm presence, and words of hope. Please sign up to participate in this 7:45 p.m. time of sharing and receive the Zoom link at rrcb.org/advent. A minister will also be present for this time.

Caroling and Christmas Music on the Plaza

On Wednesday night, December 16, at 6:30 p.m., you are invited to come carol on the front plaza at RRCB. Accompaniment and sheet music will be provided for us. You are asked to bring a flashlight so you can see your music.

We will be distanced, outdoors, and everyone is required to wear a mask at all times. Places for standing will be laid out clearly. Please park in the lot across River Road and as you join us on the plaza, avoid walking in the space of others.

We all need a dose of sweet Christmas spirit. Let's sing a little in community!

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

How about something fun and sweet that will add to your Christmas season?

A group of RRCB readers will be preparing a special presentation for you, reading the great and funny story by Barbara Robinson, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. If you have read or heard this story, you know how great it is. If you have not, this is your chance.

Maybe you would like to listen to it while you travel in your car for the holidays. Or, maybe your family would like to get in your PJ's, make some cookies to eat, and then snuggle in to listen on a night or two. However you choose to listen to the audio recording, we hope you will enjoy the creative efforts of our good folks. It'll be a pageant like no other.

BY ANNA PERRY MILLER

Advent/Christmas Services and Events

For more information and to sign up for specific events, please visit rrcb.org/advent.

Christmas Stores Gift Drop Off

Sunday, November 22, 12-2PM, North Parking Lot
Sunday, November 29, 3-4PM, North Parking Lot

Churchwide Advent Drive-Thru

Sunday, November 29, 3-4PM, North Parking Lot

Starlight Service of Remembrance & Holy Communion

Wednesday, December 9, 7PM, Online Service

Starlight Service Group Reflection

Wednesday, December 9, 7:45PM, Zoom

Caroling and Christmas Music

Wednesday, December 16, 6:30PM, Plaza

Virtual Christmas Eve Service of Worship

Thursday, December 24, Online Service

Christmas Eve Drive-Thru Worship & Food Collection

Thursday, December 24, 4:30-5:30PM, North Parking Lot

STEWARDSHIP

I'm sure you've heard before that Stewardship is multi-faceted.

On the one hand, Stewardship is about giving faithfully and generously of our money to the work of God in the world. For most of us, we choose to give through our church, for it is through the church that we most closely engage in God's mission and ministry.

In that light, our Stewardship Campaign for the 2021 Church Year is off to a good start. At the time of writing, we have reached **50%** of our goal three weeks in to the campaign. Thank you! While we are very grateful for your generous pledges to this campaign, we still have a way to go! There is plenty of time remaining to provide a pledge to the 2021 Church Budget. You may return the pledge card you received in the mail, call LeAnne Lane, church office administrator, at 804-288-1131, or securely make your pledge at rrcb.org/pledge.

On the other hand, Stewardship is not simply about the giving of money. Faithful stewardship is comprised of the myriad ways we live faithfully and generously. River Road Church, you have exceeded in this as well. To be sure, this has been a difficult and challenging year—of that there is no doubt. Through it all, however, you have continued to live out your faithfulness to God and your church family through engaging in livestream worship, continued mission collections, generous giving to church ministries, and so much more.

On behalf of a grateful church staff and lay leadership, thank you for your faithful living and giving among us.

BY DANIEL GLAZE

THOUGHTFUL FAITH COMMUNITY TFC-ADULTS: A LOOK BACK

TFC-Adults Explores Issues of Justice

Beginning in September, we started a journey on which we have been exploring different topics and issues that are ripe for study and discussion. As we look around, we can see instances of injustice abounding in our world and we are moved to ask whether God cares about it. If God does care, why is there so much injustice?

Dr. Mark Biddle spent two weeks talking with us about the views of justice and rightness in ancient times and how we often miss the fuller understanding. Suffice it to say, God cares about injustice. The discussion shared about it that explore this truth is very insightful and helpful.

In October, Rev. Dr. Valerie Carter talked with us about prejudice in the church. It is not easy for us to look squarely at a truth that points at and asks better of us. But many of you showed up for energetic, meaningful conversations about ways the church has lived and moved in the world. Dr. Carter stretched our understanding and spoke as a friend. Her example of grace extended to others is a blessing to witness and from which to learn.

Our two sessions with Dr. Carter were followed by a wonderfully rich conversation with Rev. Kasey Jones, who serves as the Associate Coordinator of Strategic Operations & Outreach with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). Our pastor and Dr.

Jones shared a conversation about how white Christians can better understand and stand with our African-American sisters and brothers. Dr. Jones was forthright and honest with us in ways that may truly help us take some next steps in building relationships, learning about others, and demonstrating God's love and grace.

We spent three weeks in November with Rev. Dr. Sam Adams exploring how justice impacts our worship, our consumption of things, and our relationships.

If you were unable to attend these sessions, please take the opportunity to listen to them on our church website. They can be found at rrcb.org/tfc-archives. They are worth your effort and time. Some of you may even want or feel the need to hear one or more again.

In December, we will forego our study times in lieu of other meaningful and fun experiences. Our Wednesdays will include the Starlight Service and an evening of caroling on the front plaza. Details about both of these evening events can be found in this edition of our newsletter.

TFC studies will resume in January. The Board of Adult Christian Education is preparing for another strong selection of topics in the new year.

BY ANNA PERRY MILLER

TFC programs are available at rrcb.org/tfc-archive

- Does God Care About Injustice? with Dr. Mark Biddle (seminary professor), Two-Part Series
- Prejudice in the Church with Rev. Dr. Valerie Carter (WMUV), Two-Part Series
- Building Helpful Bridges, A Dialogue with Daniel Glaze and Rev. Kasey D. Jones (CBF)
- Justice as Acceptable Worship, Consumerism, and Our Relationships with Rev. Dr. Sam Adams (seminary professor), Three-Part Series

ORGAN INTERLUDE SERIES

Since the early 1970s, River Road Church's concert series has inspired thousands of people by inviting them into our sanctuary, fellowship hall, and chapel to receive the gift of music. Due to an abundance of caution, which I endorse, we have not been able to hold live concerts at River Road Church since the middle of March. In the meantime, though, I am performing a series of short monthly virtual recitals on our beautifully restored and enhanced pipe organ. The aim of this Organ Interlude Series is to present a wide variety of organ repertoire that demonstrates the beauty and versatility of our instrument. It also allows us to reach out to a wide international audience through our website and through social media.



Many of you might know that our sanctuary comfortably seats just a bit more than 800 people. In recent years, certain concerts have "filled the house." So imagine my surprise when I noticed that one of the performances in the Organ Interlude Series received 2,400 views on Facebook—that's what I call outreach! It is my sincere hope that you will look forward to a new installment of organ music each month, and that you will be lifted up by the music of many great composers. And—please share with your friends.

The videos can be watched at rrcb.org/organ, on our YouTube channel, or on our Facebook page under videos.

BY BOB GALLAGHER

PRESCHOOL IS (SAFELY) IN SESSION

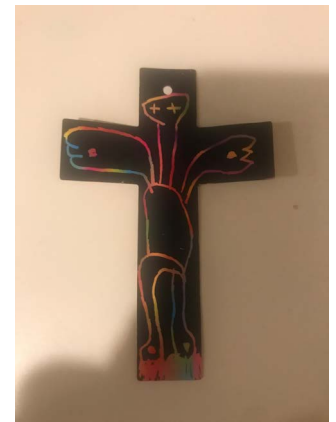


CHILDREN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

Children's ministry has looked a little different this fall. We were able to do some in person activities, especially with most children involved in remote learning.

Over the last couple of months, I visited at least eight families and enjoyed "driveway dinners" with them. It was a wonderful time of food and fellowship with children and families. We were able to talk about how school and activities were going, shared our thoughts and feelings, and enjoyed some laughs. On Sunday afternoons, children met me on the plaza or the playground for a story, game, and a treat. Children had fun seeing and playing with each other in a safe manner. Also, parents got an opportunity to reconnect as well. Along with these opportunities, I visited several families with first and third grade children to deliver bibles. Lastly, we enjoyed two drive-thrus: Back to School and Fall Festival. Children and their families got opportunity to enjoy some goodies, see ministers, and to give to others.

In the coming months there are plans to do both virtual and in person activities. Our in person activities will depend on COVID-19 numbers and weather. Breakfast chats with Mrs. Sandy by way of Zoom began this month every other Sunday mornings at 9am. A Churchwide Advent Drive-Thru is scheduled for November 29, where our church families will receive devotionals, advent wreath kits, and goodies. Plans are underway to provide opportunities during Advent for children and families to engage. Please look for upcoming events in church communications.



BY SANDY ROONEY
(CROSS BY ALEX KNERR)

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE

Running a youth program during a pandemic was not something I was taught in seminary! As the months have unfolded and the uncertainty of this time has continued, I've held on to the goal of creating opportunities for the youth to laugh, see each other, foster community, and know that the church loves them. After all, it is my belief that this is the group of people who will have their back for the rest of their life. Like many of us are experiencing, this time can feel very isolating, so creating opportunities to see and hear from others has been important. Over the past several months we've done scavenger hunts around town, driveway visits, movie nights, bingo, and youth group with small group discussions. As we head into fall and winter it's my hope to continue offering opportunities for the group to come together...but with the colder weather, this could be a challenge.

As you pray, please pray for our students. They are building friendships in a challenging and uncertain time. They are doing school completely differently than expected or how they are supposed to. They have had their extra-curricular activities canceled or severely altered. They are forming who they are in a time that is unprecedented. Thank you, RRCB for the ways you show them you love them and that they matter.



BY MARNIE FISHER-INGRAM

CARE OF SELF AND OTHERS DURING A COVID-19 HOLIDAY SEASON

Alas, we wish were not here. But we are. I offer a few thoughts on this subject with much hesitation. There are so many variables. We don't know what our status will be in regards to COVID-19 at Thanksgiving, much less Christmas. Furthermore, attitudes toward these issues varies greatly. But clarity in the midst of confusing situations is almost always a welcome gift. The clearer we can be about our own feelings, expectation, and communications, the easier it will be to care for each other this season.

1. Be clear about your knowledge of COVID-19. Do your research. Be clear about the state of COVID-19 in the places where you plan to celebrate as well the places you will travel through in route. Take this into consideration in your decisions, in your engagements, in your preparations. Take every precaution you can as an act of love for others and self.

Here is one helpful article: <https://www.vcuhealth.org/news/covid-19/covid-19-and-the-holidays>

2. Be clear about you own feelings concerning COVID-19 and how you think you (and your immediate family) need to respond. Acknowledge your own fears and struggles before you get into conversations. Realize most will share some of your feelings. Others will differ.
3. Be clear in your communications and decision processes as a nuclear family. Listen well. Parents teach well. Be ready to respond to disappointment in a caring manner. Acknowledge what you will be missing as a family. Create alternatives. Utilize this opportunity to create new traditions.
4. Be clear and consistent in your communication of your feelings and decisions to your larger family/friends. Listen with clarity as well. Make sure they know you value them even if you differ in opinion/standards/decisions. Create alternatives together with them as well.
5. Be clear about plans as far in advance as you can, but also be flexible. Situations and circumstances, even COVID-19 reports, can change. Be ready to adapt and then lean into what is positive and meaningful for you and others about the new plans.
6. Be clear about plans for connecting with those who may be isolated due to COVID-19. Physical presence may not be possible, but call, text, zoom, write, etc. Find ways to let them know they are not alone.
7. Be clear about your own emotional needs. If the holidays in general are difficult for you, or COVID-19 has made this holiday season especially difficult for you, please reach out to a pastor or mental health professional. Also, please note plans for our annual Starlight Service on December 9 (see page 2 for details).
8. Be clear about your spiritual needs. If COVID-19 means less activity and gathering, consider utilizing this holiday season in a more devotional way for yourself and your family. Lean into Gratitude during Thanksgiving. Dive deeper into Advent. Invite family and friends to do the same. Make this a topic of conversation and center of acceptable action/activity.
9. Be clear about expectations for self and family. Offer each other much grace at every stage, including yourself. COVID-19 has made this season unusual and different, and all of us are going to respond differently and sometimes not even consistently. Let's keep expectations low, and enjoy the surprises that will happen.
10. Be clear about the gift of the moment. Remember to breathe. Lean into the moment and what it has to offer you rather than dwelling on what is missing.
11. Be clear that God is with you, and that we cannot be separated from Christ's love, even by COVID-19.

MISSIONS

“To whom much is given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48)

Our church family has certainly striven to follow this passage, especially in 2020. We are in the month of Thanksgiving, and despite this chaotic year, we have much to be grateful for. Our ministers and staff freely give of their spirit, talents, and time. We enjoy virtual and in-person uplifting and inspiring services and special events. Our church members have generously given back.

Every first Sunday of the month, two volunteers collect from our giving members, one or two car loads of food. This food is distributed to either or both Church Hill Christian Wellness Center or South Richmond Baptist Center. Church Hill Christian Wellness Center, run by Rev. Glinda Ford, is located in Church Hill at 2011 Fairmont Ave. “It is a holistic ministry that exists to help adults and children, in the East End of Richmond, develop spiritually, emotionally, physically, mentally, and socially. They try to fulfill this ministry through bible study, a food pantry, a clothes closet, financial assistance, birth certifications/ DMV identifications, GED classes, computer classes, and a computer lab.” South Richmond Baptist Center, run by Rev. Wesley Garrett, is located at 700 East Belt Blvd. “They service families and residents of the southside area of Richmond. They provide bible study, an emergency food distribution, prayer gatherings, community visitations, summer camp through [Camp] Alkulana, ‘Fun in the Son’ Summer Adventure program, ‘Back 2 School’ celebration, and ‘Christmas Store.’” In addition to stocking the centers’ food pantries, our church members have provided clothing and provided 70 plus member sewn children’s masks.

River Road members also collected and delivered food and other items for Welborne United Methodist Church food pantry and Oak Grove Elementary School’s community, and the Latino Community in Fredericksburg, ministered by Sue and Gregg Smith, CBF missionaries. CARITAS guests enjoyed cooked meals provided by River Roaders. Caritas female guests were given their own apartment supplied and decorated by our members. School children started school this fall with backpacks and supplies donated and distributed by RRCB to the Crossover Ministry Community.

The Richmond Red Cross has benefitted from our church family hosting three blood drives. During these very successful drives we had over 64 participants who donated over 52 blood units which helped save over 156!

River Roaders just put together 25 plus Thanksgiving Food Boxes for Oregon Hill Baptist Center. Church will fulfill the Christmas wish lists of 25 children from the Church Hill Wellness Center community in the remaining weeks of November.

As anyone can see, RRCB members diligently work at being God’s faithful servants. Church, your Board of Missions says well done and expresses unlimited gratitude for your unending generosity. You have greatly given back and shed light during this darkened year!



BY BONNIE LIVICK

We celebrate and express thanks for the giving of our church to Special Missions Offerings in this year!

This year we have collected:

- Camp Alkulana—\$7,150
- Alma Hunt Virginia Missions—\$6,940
- CBF Global Missions—\$2,625

At a time when there are so many needs in our community, our state, our nation and around the world, members of this church have given generously. Five special missions offerings, Camp Alkulana, Alma Hunt for state missions, CBF Global Missions for national and global missions, Thanksgiving offering for Welborne UMC food pantry, and the Fellowship Fund community assistance program are given to beyond our church budgeted mission gifts. River Road has given to these offerings for years. Even in this year of COVID-19, we have done no less for these important missions, because we know the need is great everywhere.

The CBF Global Missions Offering, which normally would have been promoted around Easter, was delayed because of COVID-19’s arrival. We partner as a member church with CBF.

The Global Missions Offering is extremely important because it is the sole support of the salaries of over 60 full-time field personnel (missionaries) who work in some of the most needy places of the United States and around the world. They give whole life support and caring for many who for various reasons are in need, be it for food, job training, medical care or spiritual encouragement. Many of us know and admire Greg and Sue Smith, field personnel in Fredericksburg, VA, who work with Latinos helping in all those areas. Recently, adding to his ministry, Greg studied and became certified to advise immigrants seeking a path to citizenship. What could be more worthy than giving financial support to keep these full-time missionaries working among the needy in their field of service—putting into action the command to reach out to the least of these, who are God’s children.

If you would like to contribute to the Global Missions Offering, Thanksgiving Offering, and Fellowship Fund, please mail your check(s) to the church office with the offering listed in the memo, or visit rrcb.org/give-online.

BY JUDY MORRIS

#BeTheChurch



DR. DANIEL E. GLAZE
PASTOR
DANIELGLAZE@RRCB.ORG

DR. F. DAVID BRECKENRIDGE
MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE
DAVID@RRCB.ORG

REV. MARNIE L. FISHER-INGRAM
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR YOUTH
MARNIE@RRCB.ORG

DR. ROBERT P. GALLAGHER
MINISTER OF MUSIC
BOBGALLAGHER@RRCB.ORG

REV. DANIEL H. INGRAM
MINISTER OF ADMINISTRATION
DANIELINGRAM@RRCB.ORG

REV. ANNA PERRY MILLER
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR ADULT DISCIPLESHIP
ANNA@RRCB.ORG

MRS. SANDY K. ROONEY
MINISTER TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES
SANDYROONEY@RRCB.ORG

MS. CASSANDRA D. DUCCA
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
CASSANDRADUCCA@RRCB.ORG

MS. LEANNE K. LANE
OFFICE MANAGER
LEANNELANE@RRCB.ORG

<<LABEL_NAME>>
<<ADDRESS_1>>
<<CITY>>, <<STATE>>, <<ZIP_CODE>>

PHONE 804.288.1131
www.rrcb.org
8000 River Road
Richmond, VA 23229
info@rrcb.org

+ thoughtful faith +

RIVER ROAD CHURCH
BAPTIST



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Glen Allen, VA
Permit No. 1368