

Working together until Metro Richmond is...

TRANSFORMED

Take Up the Torch

Ten years ago I shared this reflection in our Week of Prayer pamphlet. As I considered what to write in my article, I felt led to share these thoughts again. It helps me to remember to “walk in the light” as well as to “be the light.”

Walking through my dark house one night, I did not want to wake my husband or cat by turning on any lights and caught my little toe on the leg of a chair. It is amazing how much pain such a little toe can produce!! Turning on the light would have saved me much agony and unnecessary pain.

That simple experience reminded me that many people walk in spiritual darkness all the time. Walking in darkness, people bump and bruise themselves along life’s way without Christ, the Light of the World, to guide them.

Our Community Ministry Centers and Camp Alkulana serve individuals and families who walk in darkness. We help people who have suffered unnecessary pain because of their or others’ misguided and unwise choices in life.

In such darkness, a person can stumble into the depths of addiction, strained or abusive family relationships, financial crisis, or incarceration. At other dark times like grief, divorce, illness, or a job loss a person may need assurance that spiritual light can bring as they go through such dark times.

I remember a young man who grew up in the Oregon Hill neighborhood. Steve (not his real name) came to activities at the Oregon Hill Center and Pine Street Church. He attended Camp Alkulana as a child and played on the Oregon Hill Center basketball team in his teens. An intelligent and caring person, Steve is also a Christian.

Unfortunately, like too many others, Steve got addicted to drugs. His addiction continues to be so strong that he steals to support his drug habit. In his darkness, Steve has spent most of his adult life in and out of prison.

Steve has two beautiful daughters, but he seldom sees them. They have lived with their grandmother since their mother died of a drug overdose. Homeless, the relatives with whom Steve might live cannot deal with him.

The other day Steve came to my office. I listened as he shared that he is tired of his life “on the outside.” Steve said he may do something to get put back into jail.

He said, “I am successful behind bars. I am clean and sober. I earned my GED and had begun work on my Associates degree. I was even tutoring other inmates. Out here I am a failure.”

Steve and I prayed together, and I tried to encourage him, offering words of support. I fear Steve will soon be back in jail and his daughters will go years without seeing him again.

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE

- Aug 4 CA Younger Girls Session
- Aug 5 OHBC Movie Night
- Aug 16 OHBC Back to School
- Aug 19 SRBC Back to School OHBC Movie Night
- Aug 20 CHCWC Back to School
- Aug 21 SRBC Garden Event

MINISTRY OF THE WEEK August 2022

- 8/7– The Light Community Church
- 8/14– Lighthouse International
- 8/21– Middle District Baptist Association
- 8/28– Morning Star Baptist



Contact Information

It’s time to update RCFN church contact information for our next directory ahead of the Annual Meeting. Please let us know of any changes for 2022-2023. Call us at 804-329-1701, ext. 101, or e-mail changes to office@rbaonline.org

Community Garden of Prayer

The South Richmond Baptist Center Satellite location resulted from the generosity of people who built the facility for a civic club and from the generosity of people who have blessed River City Faith Network with their gifts. The churches that form River City Faith Network own the building and fund the ministry there. The RCFN ministry that building houses supports and is a blessing to the community in that part of Richmond.

Much of my time and many volunteer hours have gone into making it into the community center that it is today. That ministry is growing and changing with the community around it.

It has taken much work to turn the civic club's home into a more suitable place for the SRBC's community ministry. Today it provides a place for Bible Study, ministry, meetings, and receptions. We have a place for computer classes and an area where children and youth can find a welcoming, safe place. Our kitchen allows us to handle the people who come to the center in need of food.

Though the site is somewhat hard to find and has limited parking, it has some green space. I think of that green space as a gift from God, another part of our ministry in the community we serve.

I have started to improve the green space. I started with a few rose bushes. They added some color and texture to the plain white side of the portion of the building we call the Annex.

In another space I planted four o'clocks, adding more shape, color, and texture. We have crepe myrtle and hydrangea too. You can even find a leafy banana tree on the Germain Road side of the property.

Trees and grass help cool an urban space in the summer. Growing things remind us of God, the Creator who planted a garden in Genesis.

I felt led to create a prayer garden near the building. Spend a few minutes there looking at the kinds of plants the Bible mentions. Think about what Jesus said about a grapevine and a fig tree.

Have a seat on the bench where you can watch the butterflies flutter by the butterfly bush. Smell the fragrant magnolia and gardenia blossoms. See the rainbow of colorful flowers. Even enjoy the water lilies in a tiny pond!

Sit. Observe. Reflect. Pray. You can do it all at the SRBC Satellite's garden.

God made different people and different plants. Both reveal God's creativity. Both grow and change. So does a garden.

Volunteers from Friendship Memorial Baptist Church labored to remove dead trees. Then they planted some new ones to add beauty and provide shade for years to come.

The dogwood trees they planted will grow. Each spring they will bloom, some white, some pink. Each fall their red seeds will add color and feed birds. These trees will also remind me, volunteers, and guests of some who have loved and supported me and the ministry of SRBC.

Four trees will stand in honor of four faithful WMU members who worked to support SRBC's ministry. Mrs. Barbara Swann was a member of Bon Air Baptist Church. God has called her home. One of the trees will honor her memory.

The other three trees will honor living women who have supported our ministry—Mrs. Kathleen Coxon, Mrs. Ruth Guill, and Mrs. Elsie Lee. Like trees, over time their work through Derbyshire, Weatherford Memorial (and now Huguenot Road), and Friendship Memorial Baptist Churches has blessed those we serve for many years.

All four women have freely given many hours and financial support to help ensure SRBC ministers to the community we serve. Mrs. Swann often asked, "If you are not telling people about Jesus, then what are you doing?"

Dogwood blossoms remind us of the sacrifice Jesus made to save all who believe in Him. We will honor each of these servants of Christ with a dogwood tree. We will dedicate those trees on **August 21 at 3:00** at the **South Richmond Baptist Center Satellite**. Please join us (enter at 5515 Bryce Lane).

—Wesley Garrett



Hatcher Memorial 100th Anniversary Celebration!

On January 29, 1923 Richmond's morning newspaper reported that Sunday morning at 11:00 about 100 persons living in the Greendale and Dumbarton areas organized a church. They named the church for the late William Hatcher, former pastor of Grace Baptist Church. The seeds of the new church had been sown at nearby Bethlehem Baptist. The door was opened for a new church to have its beginning in the



developing residential area known as Lakeside. In this 100 years Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church has survived a depression, a world war, a fire that destroyed its sanctuary, and a pandemic that closed down in-person worship. In that time, Hatcher has nurtured children and youth through a school and daycare center. The church has ministered to the deaf and persons dealing with addictions. It has supported missions in Central & South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. The church also helped start Lakeside Baptist Church and Chamberlayne Baptist Church.

Hatcher Memorial invites you to celebrate a century of ministry and God's goodness on September 18. Their centennial celebration service begins at 10:45 that morning. See www.HatcherChurch.org for details.



All Centers have slightly different needs. Churches, please contact your assigned Center to verify additional details.

Backpack (large enough for notebooks and textbooks) filled with:

- 1 three-ring binder and divider tabs
- 1 or 2 packs of loose-leaf paper (wide or standard rule)
- 4 black-and-white composition books
- 2 One-subject spiral notebooks
- 1 Three- or five-subject spiral notebook
- No. 2 pencils (not mechanical)
- Black or blue ink pens (no gel)
- Possible additional items** (*do not put in backpacks*)
- 2" three-ring binders
- Pocket folders (with or without brads) in solid colors
- 3 x 5 lined index cards & file box
- Colored pencils
- Pencil Boxes
- Crayons (pack of 16 or 24)
- Markers (washable, 8-10 pack, wide/thin)
- Highlighters
- Red pens
- Pencil sharpeners (small hand-held)
- Rulers (12 inch/metric)
- Elmer's glue-4 oz. and/or Glue sticks
- Scissors (pointed or blunt, metal)
- Erasers, pencil top and block style
- Zippered pencil pouches for 3-ring binder
- Hand sanitizer 8oz

Our ministry centers are getting an early start due to some schools resuming in August. Please contact your church's center director for updates or for more information.

Church Hill Christian Wellness Center

Glinda Ford—804-234-3549 ext.101 or 804-399-8846

Event Date: Saturday, August 20, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Delivery at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 1920 Fairmount Avenue on August 17 & 18, 10:00-Noon and 1:00-3:00 p.m.

CHCWC is collecting filled backpacks and toiletry bags; including new packages of underwear and socks (from 3T through young adult sizes) as well as the following for toiletry bags: Shampoo, Comb & Brush, Deodorant, Soap, Washcloth, Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Mouthwash, Floss and Lotion

Churches: Bethlehem (Fairmount), Bethlehem (Penick), Carlisle Ave., Derbyshire, Gayton, Ginter Park, Hatcher Memorial, Lakeside, Mount Tabor, River Road, Skipwith, and The Light Community Church

Oregon Hill Baptist Center

Jennifer Turner—804-648-1353

Event Date: Tuesday, August 16, 6:00-7:45 p.m.

Please call Jennifer or Email for **SPECIFIC NEEDS** and to make delivery appointments.

Jennifer.turner@rbaonline.org

Churches: Pine Street, First Baptist, New Community Baptist

South Richmond Baptist Center

Wesley Garrett—804-232-0174 or 804-386-8124

Event Date: Friday, August 19, 11am until 1pm

Backpacks filled with school supplies will be given out for the South Richmond zip codes: 23224, 23225 and 23235. The location is 5500 Germain Road, but the BEST way to enter the property is BEHIND 5515 BRYCE LANE. Look for signs to assist with locating the center.

The delivery dates are Monday August 15, Tuesday August 16, and Wednesday August 17, 2022, from 10:00 – 2:pm.

Churches: Bethany Place, Bon Air, First Union, Friendship Memorial, Grace, Gravel Hill, Huguenot Road, Jahnke Road, Korean, Morning Star, New Canaan, Rising Liberty, Shalom Fellowship, Southampton, St. Paul's, Stockton Memorial, Swift Creek, United for Christ, Weatherford Mission Group, Westover, Woodland Heights

River City Faith Network
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Richmond, VA 23294
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www.richmondbaptist.org

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*Working together until
Metro Richmond is...*

TRANSFORMED
August 2022



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NETWORK
Richmond Baptist Association

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Take Up the Torch *(continued from Page 1)*

I also remember the single mother of three who came seeking help. She introduced herself to me and began to pour out her story as if we were longtime friends. She had little food in the house and was way behind on bills. Her boyfriend had left and offered no help or support. The story was a familiar one to me, one I had heard many times before. For this young woman it was a painful and overwhelming reality. She wept as she asked, "What am I going to do?"

She talked. I listened. I made a few phone calls trying to find some others who, with me, might assist her. We got some food from the food pantry, some school supplies, coloring books and crayons for her children, a new pair of shoes to replace the worn ones she had on, and a list of more places to visit or call for help. As with others who come for assistance, I asked, "Would you like to pray together?"

She said, "Oh yes!" Among other things, we asked that God would send her daily reminders that she is not alone, that He is always with her and loves her. As we ended our prayer, she turned to me with tears in her eyes but a smile on her face. "You are that reminder for me today," she said. We hugged, promising to continue to pray for each other, and she left.

Our missionaries and volunteers lift up the Light of the World each week with words and deeds. They bring light to those who have bumps and bruises from walking in dark times. Donors give food, school supplies, Christmas gifts, clothes, blankets, mattresses, notes of encouragement, money, and more! Volunteers may serve a meal, hand out food bags, fold and organize clothes, clean a cabin, do repairs, paint, or pray with and for those we serve. Here is a hearty "Thank you" to all who have given time, resources, and, especially, prayers to support our ministry centers and camp!

Some still walk in darkness, so we have more to do. Consider this your invitation to "take up the torch." Please contact any of our Center Directors, Camp Alkulana Director, or the RCFN office to learn ways you and your church can help light the way!

—Jennifer Turner