

Working together until Metro Richmond is...

# TRANSFORMED

December 2023

RIVER CITY  
FAITH NETWORK

## A Weary World Rejoices

Among our Christmas hymnody there are many I count as favorites. A word or phrase that resonates in the holy moments by candlelight. As a child, the *Little Drummer Boy* opened my heart to offering what little I had to the Lord. "Do you Hear what I Hear?" excited my mind to think there was a message being shared around the world.

The world is weary this year – wars in Ukraine and Israel, suffering on all sides. Social and political divides add to the load we carry. Many a year I've shed tears at the Christmas Eve service, in part because I'm exhausted from trying to make Christmas 'perfect'. But more so because the presence of the Spirit restores peace and calm through the lyrics of *O Holy Night* and *Breath of Heaven*.

There is joy found in the giving, the gathering, and the receiving during the Advent and Christmas seasons. I am grateful for all the ways our River City Faith Network churches, members, volunteers, donors, and staff collaborate to bring a thrill of hope to our weary Richmond community. May this season remind you-

Truly He taught us to love one another.  
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace.  
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.

May sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we;  
Let all within us praise His Holy name!

*Maria Lynn*

To all our RCFN Clergy- Please join us!

### **Clergy Christmas Open House**

Monday, December 4th 10am – 1pm

At the RCFN Office- 2828 Emerywood Parkway Richmond, VA

Drop in and enjoy Coffee and Conversation!

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## Noteworthy Dates

### RCFN Clergy Coffee

December 4, 2023 pm

RCFN Office 10am– 1 pm

### CAST Meeting

December 12, 2023

RCFN Office 6:30 pm

### RCFN Office Closed

December 22, 2023 through  
January 1, 2024

### Christmas Wish Sharing Day

Church Hill–12/2/23

Oregon Hill- 12/1/23

South Richmond–12/1/23

## MINISTRY OF THE WEEK

### December 2023

12/3- The Light Community

12/10- Webber Memorial

12/17- Westover Baptist

12/24- Woodland Heights BC

12/31- Blessed New Year





## RCFN Churches Celebrate

We would like to share the details about activities held recently at two of our RCFN Churches.

The Lighthouse International Church celebrated their 20th Anniversary on October 29th. This celebration was led by Pastor Calvin Birch and was well attended at their location on John Rolfe Parkway. It was a true gathering of members and others important to the creation of this ministry. Originally from Liberia, Calvin started his ministry to refugees and immigrants from countries within Africa. Pray for growth in Lighthouse International Church, particularly in their children's ministry, which received training thanks to funds from the Alma Hunt Offering. In addition to the anniversary celebration, they were joined by the families of Ruth Guill and Billy Davis and recognized them posthumously for their contributions to the church. Please continue to pray for their church and its members.

Another celebration was occurring on October 29th as well. Skipwith Baptist installed their new pastor, Rev. Brian Thomas. This was a joint celebration between the Skipwith Baptist and Parham Road Baptist church communities as Rev. Thomas has ties to both churches.

*Below left: The reception at Skipwith with Rev. & Mrs. Brian Thomas. Below right: Rev. Thomas speaking to attendees.*



## WMU concludes year with Gathering & Giving

The Virginia WMU welcomed participants from across the state to Eagle Eyrie for their Women's Getaway on November 3-5th. This meeting included their Annual meeting and inspirational sessions and activities to steer WMUs into the new year.

Local RCFN WMU members are busy helping with each centers' Christmas Wish activities and also collected items for the Fluvanna Women's Correctional facility this past month. Mary Palmer shared that a very full carload made its way to Fluvanna and the donated items were accepted by a new young minister at the church who has ties with First Baptist Ashland. She would like to share her gratitude to everyone who helped with these ministry activities. "Thank you so much for making this possible this year and it has been a great success. God blesses you all for your dedication and hard work." In regards to the Fluvanna gifts, she shared "May our prayers for these ladies help their lives make a change for the better life they can have."



*Above: The Guill and Davis families join Rev. Birch to celebrate. The Lighthouse members gather for the worship service.*



*Top: Valerie Carter (center), VA WMU Director joins members of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church for the WMU Women's Getaway. Above: Friendship Memorial WMU members*



## Lee family in the spotlight on the “Red Couch”

*Shared from the HRBC Connect*

We are pleased to share that our Chick-Fil-A (CFA) “Red Couch” commercial was selected to be featured in “The Story Behind – It’s the Little Things.” The title is “The Story Behind Empty Nester” and it was released the last week of October. The Red Couch commercial has been running on television and on the CFA YouTube channel since August. The Story Behind runs solely on their YouTube channel.

After the filming of the commercial in Atlanta in April, we received a call and were notified that they wanted to come to Midlothian to film the longer Story Behind video. (The TV commercial is 31 seconds while the Story Behind video is two minutes – 39 seconds.) The production crew traveled to Midlothian in June. It was Vacation Bible School week at church and the crew was happy to work around our schedule. They set up at our home on a Wednesday and filmed Melanie, Isabella and me interacting as a family (photo below). It was amazing to see our kitchen and living room transformed into a movie set!

The next day, we met the crew at the Chick-Fil-A store at Westchester Commons. There, they filmed us interacting with Tori, the CFA Team member who had originally offered outstanding customer service the



morning of August 19, 2022. That’s when we were to take Isabella to college for her Freshman year. The crew recreated the entire chain of events on that day. It was so cool to have a cameraman in the car as we went around the drive-thru! In fact, they blocked off an entire drive-thru lane for filming purposes. It was quite amazing to be part of this! The crew also used a drone to film over the Midlothian Mines Park to give viewers a taste of the area.

All of this happened because the CFA corporate culture values people first. They embrace a “Second-Mile Mindset” where they follow the golden rule and empower their team members to go the second mile for their customers. While CFA certainly sells chicken sandwiches, CFA is ultimately in the people business. They truly believe that it’s the “little things” that make the biggest difference. Where does this come from? It stems from the Christian values that first inspired founder, Truett Cathy, and his wife and family: “To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A.”

One of the joys here at HRBC is that we share these same values where people come first. Let us continue to value others through doing small acts of kindness that can make the biggest difference!

- Rev. Bob Lee, Pastor of Huguenot Road Baptist Church

*You can access the video online via YouTube: Chickfila page titled “Empty Nester”*



### RCFN Care and Concern

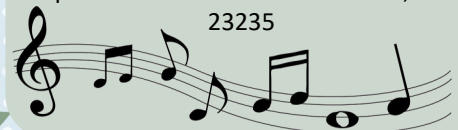
The River City Faith Network expresses their sincere condolences to the families, friends, and congregations on the passing of:

Charles Loving– Supporter of the Oregon Hill Baptist Center



### Spiritual Concert at Friendship Memorial Baptist Church 12/10/23

Please join them as **Frances White** will provide uplifting music for all attendees. The event is free, but a love offering will be collected. The program begins at 3 p.m. at 1901 Hicks Rd Richmond, VA 23235



### Camp Alkulana Christmas Sale

Camp Alkulana Shirts for Sale! Part of Camp Alkulana's beauty is the mature pine trees that cover the landscape. In fact, our outdoor worship space is called Piney Park! Today, camp's symbol is portrayed as a lantern, but several decades ago, it was a pine tree. We're offering these special "throw-back" shirts as a celebration of our camp history, to honor the beautiful landscape, and as a perfectly-timed Christmas gift. Pick out a shirt today for yourself or a loved one at [this link](#). The sale will end on Monday, November 28 with an estimated delivery of December 14th.

[www.customink.com/fundraising/camp-alkulana-christmas-sale](http://www.customink.com/fundraising/camp-alkulana-christmas-sale)

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Metro Richmond is...*

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December 2023

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*Your year end gift is one click away! Please consider a donation to the River City Faith Network to help those in our communities seeking assistance from our ministries. Email [office@rbaonline.org](mailto:office@rbaonline.org) or visit the website for our Giving Tuesday page! Thank you for your support!*

November 28th, 2023 is

**GIVING TUESDAY**

Please consider a gift  
to the RCFN Mission  
Offering for this year's  
Giving Day or for your  
end of the year  
donations.



RCFN  
Mission  
Offering

RIVER CITY  
FAITH NETWORK

**END OF THE YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS**

**December 31, 2023**

**ALL CASH, CHECKS AND ONLINE DONATIONS MUST NOW  
BE COMPLETED OR POSTMARKED WITH 12/31/23 FOR  
PROCESSING FOR FY 2023. ALL DAFs OR FUND TRANSFERS,  
PLEASE ALLOW 4-5 DAYS TO PROCESS AHEAD OF 12/31/23.  
CALL 804-329-1701 EXT; 101 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.**

[www.richmondbaptist.org/givingtuesday](http://www.richmondbaptist.org/givingtuesday)