## 2017 CHRISTMAS STORE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Churches</th>
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<td>Wellness Center</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Lighthouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Church</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**ORBC and SRBC totals combined are:**
- 79 Volunteers from 11 different churches
- 21 churches, gave items and money

**TOTALS**
- 181 Families
- 402 Children
- 151 Volunteers
- 31 Churches

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

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**RIVER CITY FAITH NETWORK**
**OF The Richmond Baptist Association**
**STAFF**
Musings from Mike:

Making New Year’s resolutions! It’s an exercise that many well-meaning people engage in on an annual basis. I’ve done it and I’m quite confident that nearly everyone who is reading this article has done likewise. And like you, I’ve never made a New Year’s resolution I did not intend to keep!

The logical questions to ask, it seems to me, are, “If you and I genuinely intended to keep them, why did we fail to do it?” And, “Did we break them all?” “If not, why did we keep some and break others?” “Is it just a matter of trying harder?” “Are all of us really just so weak that keeping resolutions and promises, either to ourselves, God or others is just impossible?”

It’s a messy subject—this thing of keeping promises, honoring good intentions, and living out New Year’s resolutions! New Year’s, by the way, is not the only life occasion that prompts promise making or crafting resolutions. Moments of desperation often urge us to bargain with God by making a promise of some kind or expressing resolve. “Oh, Lord, if You will only do such and such, I promise that I will never again....” Or, “I promise that from now on I will always...!” YOU fill in the blank! We all have said similar things at one time or another, haven’t we? We’ve all filled in the blanks in our own way. Unfortunately, as soon as the stressful situation passed, oftentimes, so did our memory of our end of the bargain, resulting in another promise broken, another commitment not kept, another moment of resolve dissolved.

For those of us in leadership roles within the Christian community, it is tempting to prompt those following us to make promises or commitments, and it is a worthy ambition! There’s Biblical precedence for this kind of motivational leadership. Both Psalms 22 and 37 call upon one to make a commitment. Psalm 22 tells us to commit ourselves to the Lord. Psalm 37 tells us to commit our way. In each of these Psalms the reader is then directed to an acknowledgement that his or her commitment is followed by the anticipation that God will act to rescue or to bring deliverance. The word “commit” is used in the 1995 edition of the New American Standard Bible 48 times in 43 sections and nearly always in relationship to some version of breaking the law or sinning against God and one another. In the two instances earlier cited the word is used synonymously with the notion of “trusting” in the action of another, in each case, the action of God.

Similarly, the word “promise” is used 51 times in 48 sections from both the Old and New Testaments. Only on three occasions is the word used to describe human behavior. All other uses refer to what God is doing, has done or will do. The preponderance of evidence points to the recognition that the One Who is excellent at keeping promises is God Himself; only in the book of Nehemiah as the prophet addresses the practice of usury among Jews with fellow Jews does the word “promise” refer to human activity and a human commitment one to another.

The implication is not necessarily that promise-making is a bad thing, but along with such a call to commitment should come the realization that the supreme Promise Keeper is God, the Lord, and not us! It is more fitting, therefore, to call our fellow travelers to pay close attention to the One who makes promises and keeps them. To know Him and to know His promises, not as bargaining chips, but as foundations for a sturdy and steady faith in the midst of a chaotic world, is reassuring and immensely helpful.

I’m all for making and keeping promises, honoring commitments and sticking to healthy resolutions. It is a wonderful practice and each of us should do our very best at it. As Christians we even have the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us toward becoming ever more faithful as our Christ-following journey lengthens.

A key to success at making resolutions that stick, promises that materialize, and commitments that we keep may be more in the “why” of the resolution, promise or commitment than the “what!” An emotional response to danger, desperation and disappointment or even the exhilaration of new-found love, while powerful motivators in themselves, usually lose their power as the emotional response retreats. I’ve found that the most powerful “why” for me has been a gratitude response, usually directed at our Heavenly Father or other significant fellow travelers such as family members. The other day I had promised my grandson, Brayden, that I would pick him up from school for some special time together. When an appointment that had to be honored just prior to my departure from the office to pick him up ran later than I expected, I was frantic to keep my promise, to be on time and not disappoint! I am so grateful for our relationship that I wanted to do all that I could to honor the commitment I had made.

In a few short weeks, many of us will make another brave attempt to promise to do better in 2018 — to lose weight, to exercise more, to eat less or healthier, to love better, to behave more maturely, to give more, to complain less or to advance some skill we have yearned to perfect. Colossians 3:23 encourages our resolve by offering a great invitation: “Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord, rather than for men.” For me, this verse from the apostle Paul offers a great “why.” Who has done more for each of us for which we can be thankful?

The smiles on the faces of these youngster who received new bikes from our RCFN Christmas Stores this week also remind me of YOUR faithfulness. Thank you for supplying so well so that families across Richmond might have a brighter CHRISTmas!

Thank you for the consistency of your resolve to partner with sister churches to do more together than any of us can do separately!

So gratefully,

Mike
Writers’ Block

Dr. Peter James Flamming is Pastor Emeritus of the First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, where he served as Senior Pastor for more than twenty years. Under his leadership, Richmond’s First Baptist became a vibrant and diverse urban congregation, and it remains so today, under the leadership of Dr. Jim Somerville, his staff and fine lay guidance. Ordained as a minister in 1955, “Jim” Flamming has served in the ministry nearly 65 years. Part of that service has been as a visiting professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, as well as continued Catalyst Prayer ministry at Richmond’s First Baptist Church.

Dr. Flamming is the recent author of Never Stop Starting, a book to challenge, inspire, and offer encouragement for your life’s journey, sharing modern aging wisdom through the lens and experiences of 12 biblical characters. Dr. Flamming effectively addresses the question, “How do we lead a meaningful and vibrant life in our later years?” In his words he states, “It is my hope and my prayer that this book helps you answer this vitally important question. Each chapter... emphasizes one key discovery made by one biblical personality (or, in the case of chapter 11, a duo: Naomi and Ruth). Some of these scriptural characters are widely known, such as Abraham, Moses, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, while others may be less familiar, such as Anna and Esther. Famous or not, each of these men and women offer an important lesson on how we might live rich, purposeful lives in our later years.”

This book came about as a result of a lecture series that Dr. Flamming gave for a retirement community. At that time, he was newly retired but didn’t yet see himself as old or even aging in a significant way. And so, he was met with a dilemma! Where was he to start? What should be his message?

He called a friend, Theresa Norton, who holds a Master’s degree in gerontology (one who studies the aging process), because he knew he needed help and insight. Theresa and Dr. Flamming began talking about how biblical personalities and their stories hold great insight for those in their later years. These discussions led to the need for new learning and research, so Dr. Flamming’s library quickly expanded to include a section for this essential exploration—a topic that would parallel his own personal journey. During more than half a century of ministry, Dr. Flamming has told biblical stories about these characters many times, but he had never considered their wisdom from the perspective of those in their later years.

Dr. Flamming puts it this way in the book’s introductory remarks: “As I prepared my lectures and reconsidered these biblical personalities in a new light, I began to fully appreciate the potential benefits of later life. It’s during the later years that the secret of living, that secret of life so often elusive in former years, becomes not only clear but also vibrant. In the chapters that follow, I hope you will discover the possibility of seeing yourself in a new light—through the life stories of others. Some readers may have heard about these biblical characters since childhood, but, given our new stage in life, it is time for us to see them in a new way.

If you don’t know anything about the Bible, no matter. The stories are used as encouraging illustrations of people who have been there, who have faced the challenges you are facing. And if you do know a few things about the Bible, you may have never seen these biblical personalities in real-world situations, as people who came head-to-head with the same dilemmas you are encountering every day of your later life.

Sociologists and gerontologists divide our lives into three segments or ages. The first age is our formative years of childhood, growth, education, and preparation for a vocation. The second age describes the middle years of life. Maybe we leave home, graduate from a college or university, find work, marry, have children, and so on. During these years, vocation largely defines our purposes in life. Many describe these years as the prime of life. Eventually, these years come to an end and we enter the third segment or third age of life. The third age is often considered retirement and beyond. What has been is no more. What will be is often obscured and even frightening.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, author of The Third Chapter, interviewed those who had recently retired and were moving into what she calls the third chapter of life. One participant said of the experience, “Suddenly I was in the wilderness with very little in the way of a fundamental core of selfhood.” Another, who had been an organizational consultant for large institutions, agencies, foundations, universities, and non-profits, spoke of a “lethargy and a listlessness” after her retirement. She described it as a “chasm of emptiness.”

Part of the reason for her emptiness is that if we look outward, we often find our culture places little value on this later stage of life. We are accustomed to receiving affirmation and even commendation during the second age of life. But in the third age, we may feel that there is mostly silence.

We have to face this cultural norm. In the third age, meaning and purpose are not going to come from outside sources. Our parents and other key influences are no longer there to guide and affirm us. In fact, if they’ve lived long enough, we may be the ones affirming them. Our vocation or work, which earlier gave us a place and affirmed our worth, is no longer there. We may be remembered on special days, but on all of the other days, our affirmation and value has to come from within.

In the first two stages of life, affirmation and direction often come from others or from our occupation. That’s why upon retirement, most of us feel lost. But eventually we must realize that what has been cannot be repeated. If we can listen with the spiritual ears of our hearts, we are apt to realize that endings are often the prelude to new beginnings.”

To receive your copy of Dr. Peter James Flamming’s book go to www.Amazon.com and search by title or go to First Baptist’s online link http://www.fbcrichmond.org/resources/news-and-other-resources/never-stop-starting/. There is so much to be learned by those of us aging as well as those knowing, ministering to, and living with this fastest growing segment of our United States population!
CHURCH HILL CHRISTIAN
WILLNESS CENTER
COMMUNITY MISSIONARY
REv. GLINDA FORD
2011 Fairmount Ave, Richmond, VA 23223
(804) 780-0053  glinda.ford@rbaonline.org
(Located in Mount Tabor Baptist Church )

WMU - Mission Action Assignments for
CHCWC in 2018:
You have been so generous with your do-
nations in 2017 we find ourselves well sup-
plied with the listed creamer, sugar, sugar
substitute and trash bags .
Please substitute TP and
Paper towels
for the above items.
Thank you,
Glinda

FEBRUARY is the month SRBC asks
the children to bring in their REPORT
CARDS and PROGRESS REPORTS
to the center in order to receive
school supplies or a new backpack.
By seeing the REPORT CARDS and
PROGRESS REPORTS it gives those
helping at the SRBC a chance to con-
gratulate or encourage the children in
their pursuit of
success. (Or may-
be a little extra en-
couragement to
hang on.)

SOUTH RICHMOND BAPTIST CENTER
COMMUNITY MISSIONARY
REv. WESLEY GARRETT
700 East Belt Blvd., Richmond, VA 23224
(804) 232-0174 Wesley.garrett@rbaonline.org
(Located in The Saint Paul’s Baptist Church,
Belt Campus )

WORDS for the RCFN WORD SEARCH

ASSISTANCE CLOTHES JESUS RCFN
BACKPACKS COATS LAUNDRY SAD
BIBLE STUDY DOLLARS LEARN SATELLITE
BIRTH CERTIFI-
CATES FAMILY LOVE SERVING
CABINS FUN MATS SEWING
CAMP ALKULANA GIFT CARDS MEALS SHINE
CHANGE GOD MENTORING SOUTH RICHMOND
CHILDREN GOLF MOVIES SUMMER
CHRIST GROCERY OFFERING THANKSGIVING
CHRISTMAS HAPPY OREGON HILL TOY
STORES
CHURCH HILL HOMELESS OUTDOORS WMU
CHURCHES HOPE PEACE YOUTH

CAMP ALKULANA: Clean Up Days
May 19, 2018 and June 2, 2018
Help us get ready for the summer season! Plenty to do: Match
the task with it’s picture.

Light carpentry
General repair
Yard work
Spring Cleaning
OHBC is in need of donations for their laundry ministry to the homeless. The detergent pods are preferred. Monetary gifts are always appreciated. Thank you!

OREGON HILL BAPTIST CENTER
COMMUNITY MISSIONARY
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campalkulana@gmail.com

ANNA TUCKWILLER—REGISTRAR
(804) 329-1701 ext. 112
campalkulana@gmail.com

3 JOHN 1:4 NIRV
I HAVE NO GREATER JOY THAN TO HEAR THAT MY CHILDREN ARE LIVING BY THE TRUTH.

MATCH THE CENTERS’ Community missionaries and CAMP ALKULANA’s director with the correct location.

Rev. Wesley Garrett — Church Hill Christian Wellness Center
Rev. Jennifer Turner — Camp Alkulana
Rev. Glinda Ford — Oregon Hill Baptist Center
Mrs. Beth Wright — South Richmond Baptist Center
Experience Tons of Great 2018 VBS Curriculum Options in One Location!

Preview: THURSDAY, February 8th, 1:00—4:00 PM
FRIDAY, February 9th, noon—5:00 PM;
SATURDAY, February 10th, 10:00 AM—2:00 PM

So many choices—Let us help you find dozens of possibilities together in one place!

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*CONORDIA     *DAVID C. COOK
*URBAN MINISTRIES, INC.    *ABINGDON
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For details - Phone: 804-358-8306
Email: info@resourcingchurches.com
Website – www.resourcingchurches.com
RIVER ROAD CHURCH, BAPTIST Welcomes Rev. Marnie Fisher-Ingram as their new Associate Pastor for Youth and their families and Rev. Daniel Ingram as their new Minister of Administration.

For a larger version of this answer grid see our website: www.richmondbaptist.org

To help church staff and church lay leaders understand and comply with tax laws, a series of FREE seminars sponsored by the Compensation Planning Ministry of the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) will be held across the state in February and March 2017. The Richmond Seminar will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2018. The Seminar will begin at 9:30 am and end at 12:00 pm.

The seminars are designed for church staff and lay leaders who handle taxes and compensation. Attendees will get help with compensation planning for church staff (including retirement and insurance), handling minister’s taxes, and federal reporting requirements for churches. Jeff Cranford, Compensation Planning Specialist, Congregational Field Staff, BGAV, will lead the seminars.

For information or to register for the seminar, register online at BGAV.org/events/church-clergy-tax-seminar-6/
Deaf Mission Chapel - FBC
Derbyshire Cambodian
Hatcher Memorial
The Mount Carmel
Woodland Heights

Pray for the RCFN Church of the Week

Jan. 7.....Woodland Heights
Jan. 14.....River City Faith Network
Jan. 21.....Camp Alkulana
Jan. 28.....Church Hill Christian Wellness Center “The Well”
Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12) NIV

RCFN Board of Directors’ Meeting
JANUARY 23, 2018
7:00 PM
3111 Moss Side Ave., LCR Richmond, VA

Pray for the RCFN of the RBA Churches
seeking a PASTOR

Thank you for your continued support of RCFN

2017 RCFN Budget Report

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Camp Alkulana Offering

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<tr>
<td>Offering Goal</td>
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Writers’ Block is a new periodic feature in the “TRANSFORMED!”
It is designed to give exposure to Christian authors related to the RCFN whose work sometimes goes virtually unknown. Inclusion in this column is in no way an endorsement of the viewpoints or opinions expressed by the author. Authors are encouraged to submit their information.
(See the RCFN website: www.richmondbaptist.org)