



Alex Evans, Pastor

Dear Church Family,

The month of March this year is covered fully by the Season of Lent. Presbyterians have not always celebrated Lent.

John Calvin, the 16th century Swiss reformer, remained dubious of anything that smacked of Roman Catholic tradition or practice. But Calvin

would have been in favor of life and practices that deepened faith, encouraged discipleship, promoted prayer, piety, and God's work in the world.

In this space as we move into Lent, I offer some reflections from scholars and spiritual writers whose pieces have encouraged my faith and practice.

Here is a comment from Henri J. M. Nouwen:

There is no such thing as the right place, the right job, the right calling or ministry. I can be happy or unhappy in all situations. I am sure of it, because I have been. I have felt distraught and joyful in situations of abundance as well as poverty, in situations of popularity and anonymity, in situations of success and failure. The difference was never based on the situation itself, but always on my state of mind and heart. When I knew I was walking with God, I always felt happy and at peace. When I was entangled in my own complaints and emotional needs, I always felt restless and divided.

This season of Lent, we seek to walk with God.

Ruth Land, another spiritual writer, says this:

You can look everywhere for peace, but you may not find it. Or you can forget yourself and get on with whatever work is there in front of you. That's what brings peace – doing whatever needs to be done in the house, showing love to your spouse, or

whatever else comes to mind. If you do it for the sake of the kingdom, it will bring you peace.

This season of Lent, we seek to walk and serve in the ways of peace.

Alice von Hildebrand wrote a book called *Rich in Years*:

I ride on the subway and look at the faces: boredom, despair, sadness. This, in the richest country in the world! But the moment that you relate to God – and thank him for your existence, for loving you, for being your Savior – you can establish a most beautiful relationship with other people. You love and help one another. You realize the meaning of your life is not luxury and fun, but it is helping. Once you radiate joy, sooner or later people are going to say, "What's her secret?" And then gently, without preaching, without saying "I'm superior to you," you just share. After all, the meaning of the word "gospel" is "the happy message." That's all we can do. Obviously there are moments of darkness and discouragement. There are moments when we lose sight of the beauty of the sky because there are clouds. But one very fine day you come out of it. We are made for joy. Don't expect Paradise on this earth. But there is meaning, and this meaning is the love of God.

This season of Lent, may we discover the joy and love of God.

May this season of Lent renew us, refresh us, and re-dedicate us to faithful lives in worship and service as God's people.

See you soon,

Alex

Highlights from the Session Meeting

At the February meeting, the Session:

- ◆ Heard a strong report on the Church's good start to the financial year;
- ◆ Approved again with joy the annual agreement with Parish Associate, Dr. Sam Adams;
- ◆ Approved with joy the August and Virginia Davis Enrichment Fund that promises to bring guest preachers and special lectures and events to Second Presbyterian;
- ◆ Discussed urban challenges and continued to work on helpful guidelines for dealing with daily challenges and requests for assistance;
- ◆ Heard a report from the recent Presbytery meeting;
- ◆ Heard updates on the Parking Deck and Capital Campaign;
- ◆ Approved some motions related to our budget and budget process;
- ◆ Heard positive news from UKirk and our recent Child Care Center auction;
- ◆ Celebrated the many places of positive energy and ministry: older adults, young adults, outreach efforts with refugees and others, Acts of Faith, and more;
- ◆ Shared pastoral concerns and prayer.



The August and Virginia Davis Enrichment Fund

The Session established this special fund at its February 2017 meeting.

August (Gus) and Virginia (Ginny) Davis were married in the sanctuary at Second Presbyterian Church in the 1940's. Following their retirement, after years of living in other places, they returned to Richmond and became devoted members of Second Presbyterian Church. Ginny Davis died in November 2005. Gus Davis died in December 2015.

Faithful with weekly worship, deeply committed to the ministries and outreach of this church, so generous with their annual pledge, Gus Davis also bequeathed to Second Presbyterian Church, upon his death, significant funds to help shine God's light in this city and beyond. Prior to his death, Gus designated the "August and Virginia Davis Enrichment Fund" to establish the August and Virginia Davis Enrichment Series.

- ◆ This series would be arranged by the pastors and Session, through a special committee, to bring guest preachers, guest lectures, and special seminars to Second Presbyterian Church with a special emphasis on Christian renewal, discipleship, and encouragement in the faith.
- ◆ This series would provide occasions for the church to open its doors wide to the larger community in the metro region, to share such speakers and events with the general public.

We remain most grateful for this generous gift and his thoughtfulness. May we all be encouraged and inspired in such generosity and foresight.



Wednesday, March 1

Dinner at 6pm Chili Cookoff Dinner *prepared by Men of the Church*

Worship at 7pm in the Chapel

Adult Education in March

March 5

Nursery

Parents of Young Children

Encouraging young families to share the joys and challenges of raising children in the faith. Meets once a month.

March 5, 12, 19, 26

Dining Room



Dr. Luckritz Marquis

Assistant Professor of Church History, Union Presbyterian Seminary

Lenten Wisdom from the Desert Fathers and Mothers

Led by Christine Luckritz Marquis

From the beginning of Christianity, Christians have engaged in embodied spiritual practices to deepen their intimacy with God. Modern Christians continue to find inspiration in the monks who lived in the deserts of Egypt. But the wisdom of these ancient women and men runs even deeper. For just as Christians today do, they faced the challenges of engaging neighbors. We will spend the weeks leading up to Easter thinking through the radical but also sometimes problematic heritage our desert brothers and sisters bequeathed us with regard to issues such as gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, economic and food justice, and how we frame violence.

Room 308

Bible Class with Franklin Reding

Suite 301

Faith and Literature Class with Marjorie Clark

The 40s: The Story of a Decade—discussing outstanding literary selections.

Arts Committee News

- ◆ The Arts Committee announces an exciting spring exhibit, “Seen on the Streets,” an artist’s insight into life in our urban environment. The show will open the weekend of **Palm Sunday, April 9**, and members of the congregation are invited to contribute original art, including photography, mixed-media, or painting. Art works can be brought to the church during the week preceding April 7. Entry forms will be found at the Deacon’s Desk and on the hall credenza. We look forward to a blockbuster event with many participants!
- ◆ The Committee invites you to join our Second Presbyterian artists for a special “thank you” reception on **Sunday, March 5** after worship. Come and express your appreciation to our talented members who have contributed to the last five art shows.
- ◆ The Arts Committee enhances the life of our church by overseeing the hanging of Easter banners, Pentecost mobiles, saints for All Saints Day, the World Communion display and the Advent crèche display. Let us know if you would like to be a part of this active group. Please email Mary Millet, chairman (marymillet@gmail.com) or Anne Jefferson (maryacj@aol.com) if you have questions.





The Kerygma Class has started a new series listening to a 12-Part DVD teaching series from Union Presbyterian Seminary on the book of Revelation, taught by Dr. Brian K. Blount. We meet the second Wednesday of every month from 12 noon - 1:30 pm. Contact Ginger Evans if you are interested in joining us!

Work in West Virginia! April 1-8

Lend a hand. Give a week! Help repair and rebuild homes that were destroyed last summer by torrential rains and massive flooding that hit Richwood, West Virginia. All skills levels (including non-skilled) are needed and welcomed. This trip is organized by the Presbytery of the James and is led by Brown Pearson, an elder at Southminster Presbyterian Church with many years of experience. There is a place for you!



The Presbytery is sharing in the costs, but each participant is invited to make a voluntary contribution of \$250 for expenses.

Sleeping arrangements are at Richwood Presbyterian Church.

For more information contact Mary Jane Winter at mjwinter@comcast.net or Brown Pearson at cbpearson3@erg-homes.com.

RVA Metro Transit: How Can You Be Involved?

During the month of January, around 20 people gathered each Sunday morning to study *Corridors of the Kingdom: Exploring Transit as People of Faith*. Based on our study and discussion, we would like to share the following ways that Second Presbyterian can advocate for regional public transportation.

- Ride the GRTC bus system. Share your experiences.
- Email your representative on City Council or your Board of Supervisors and let them know that you support public transit.
- Attend council or supervisors' meetings and participate in the public comment period.
- Talk with your neighbors and co-workers about your support.
- Pray for regional public transit initiatives.
- Go to the website <https://www.rvarapidtransit.org/> and learn more.

Stock Gifts

The church accepts gifts of stock in lieu of a financial donation to satisfy a pledge. Please contact the church office for instructions on how to transfer stock to the church's investment account.

It is important to let us know when this is to take place so we can match the stock gift with the appropriate donor. The financial institution from where the stock is coming does not always alert the church office of this transfer. *Thank you.*

CARITAS

IS

COMING!

April 22-29

Second Sunday Lunch!

March 12

Menu

Ele's Famous Meatloaf

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Green Beans & Tomatoes

Assorted Desserts



Adults and Youth \$8; Kids (10 and under) \$5

AFOI Silent Auction and Annual Meeting—Thursday, March 16—6:00 pm

We are pleased to announce that Assisting Families of Inmates will be hosting its Silent Auction and Annual Meeting the evening of Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 6:00 pm.

We cordially invite all members of the congregation to attend and hear authors of *Writing Our Way Out: Memoirs from Jail* (a creative culmination of a writing class that began in the Richmond City Jail) by Dr. David Coogan, associate professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University, with co-authors Kelvin Belton, Terence Scruggs and Dean Turner. We are so honored that they are joining us this year.

The event is free and open to the public. RSVP to Fran Bolin at 804-643-2401 or afbolin@yahoo.com.

We truly hope to see you there!

AFOI is also gratefully accepting donations for our Silent Auction. Each year this auction helps generate much-needed funds for the organization's programs, and the support of this congregation is always much appreciated. To donate, please contact Fran Bolin. Thank you!



Sunday, March 5	Church School and Worship Dinner and Fellowship Meeting	9:30 am 5-7 pm
Sunday, March 12	Church School and Worship and Second Sunday Lunch	9:30 am
Sunday, March 19	Church School and Worship Dinner and Fellowship Meeting	9:30 am 5-7pm
Sunday, March 26	Church School and Worship Youth Day at Camp Hanover	9:30 am 2-4 pm

Second Seniors Coming Attractions!

- Second Seniors is sponsoring a trip to see the Acts of Faith play, *Choir Boy*, at Richmond Triangle Players on **Sunday, March 12 at 4:00 pm** (which includes a talkback with either Alex or Kathryn). Sign up at the Deacon's Desk.
- **Friday, March 17** will be the **monthly breakfast** at McLean's. Sign up at the Deacon's Desk.
- **Sunday, April 2**, John Moeser will present a bus tour of Richmond entitled "A Richmonder's Tour of Richmond" following Lunch at Second.
- **Sunday, April 30**, there will be a Second Seniors **Fifth Sunday Luncheon** (restaurant TBD).
- **Sunday, May 21** plans include lunch at the Capitol after church, followed by a tour of the Capitol and the gardens of the Governor's Mansion.



Flower Arrangers Needed

Katharine Anderson and Dick Gibbons are working on adding flower arrangers to the flower calendar. If you are interested in helping in this important ministry, please contact Katharine at 355-0825.

UKirk at VCU

This semester our UKirk students have been inspired by the Montreat College Conference in January, where keynote speaker Valarie Kaur—a civil rights lawyer, Sikh activist, award winning filmmaker, and interfaith leader—encouraged all of us to practice listening to other peoples' stories.

Therefore, this spring, we are taking the time to listen to the stories of people whose cultures or faith traditions may be unfamiliar to us, and then to practice telling our own stories. Throughout the month of February we practiced hearing these stories through the art of film. We began with watching Kaur's documentary *Divided We Fall*, a film about the rise in hate crimes against Sikh Americans after 9/11. Then we spent three weeks watching and discussing the film *Schindler's List*, about the work of one man to try and combat the destructive hatred of the holocaust during WWII. These films have allowed our students to hear the voices of people who differ from them in religious beliefs and life experiences, while at the same time reinforcing the understanding that we are all children of God.

Our discussions have been heavy at times, and joyful at others. Each new story the students encounter has given them a better grasp on the diversity of humanity and our calling to treat everyone as a brother or a sister.

We also still have a few spots left on our meal sign up page. If you haven't taken the opportunity to make us a meal and come share dinner with us, please do!

Our students love getting to know more members of the congregation and they appreciate all of the amazing food we have been given so far. Here is the link to sign up:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0a45acab22a4fd0-spring>

Come share Thursday night dinner with us, and as always, thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Peace,

Molly R. Spangler

Plant Trees in Guatemala! August 14-21

“Caring for God’s Creation” is the theme of the presbytery’s mission trip to Guatemala and will include planting trees in a much-needed reforestation project with a Mayan community. Hosted by CEDEPCA, our Presbyterian mission partner that has a relationship with Second Presbyterian Church, the week will also engage in their ministry with disaster recovery, environmental justice, the empowerment of women, and most of all a biblical faith that points to Christ and the new world God desires for us all. Weather is cool, lodging is in small hotels (private bath), and the activity level is moderate. The trip is co-sponsored with Peaks Presbytery. Total cost estimated at \$1700. Subsidy available. For more information or an application, contact Mary Jane Winter, one of the leaders, at mjwinter@comcast.net.



Em Key will lead our discussion based on scriptures from John 1; 9; 10; 1st Corinthians 2:1-2; 2nd Corinthians 5:17-20; Philippians 2:1-4 and Acts 18.

Presbyterian Women Circle 2 ~ Tuesday, March 7

Circle #2 will meet on Tuesday, March 7 at 11:00 am at Westminster Canterbury’s 5th Floor Courtyard Reception Room. Betsy King, Evelyn Hill and Frances Holladay will be the hostesses. We will continue our study of “Who is Jesus?”

Em Key will lead our discussion based on scriptures from John 1; 9; 10; 1st Corinthians 2:1-2; 2nd Corinthians 5:17-20; Philippians 2:1-4 and Acts 18.

Presbyterian Women Circle 1

Tuesday, March 14 at 10:30 am

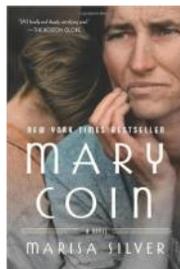
Westminster Canterbury 6th Floor

Literary Circle

Tuesday, March 14

Literary Circle will meet on March 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Ellen Coates, 4801 Brook Road.

The discussion of *Mary Coin* by Marisa Silver will be led by Ann Foster Marriner. Please contact Carolyn Brandt (288-2511, crbrandt1412@gmail.com) or Page Wagner (323-7038) for more information.



Day Book Group

Tuesday, March 21, 10:00 am

The Day Book Group will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 21, in Room 308, The Virginia Building.



The book for discussion is *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie.

All are welcome.

Volunteers Needed

Court-Appointed Special Advocates (“CASAs”) are everyday citizens appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for abused and neglected children. Could you be the voice for a child in need? CASA is looking for volunteers to participate in an upcoming training class. If you are interested in becoming a CASA, please contact: Heather Farber heather.farber@richmondgov.com (804)646-5180. Visit the website for more information: <http://grscan.com/programs/richmond-casa/>



Second Presbyterian Church
OF RICHMOND VIRGINIA

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March 1

6pm Dinner

7pm Worship



Time to
Spring Ahead

March 12