

"The Messenger"

May 2019
Volume 33.5

St. John's
United Church
of Christ

St. John's United Church of Christ is a diverse community forming a united congregation, seeking to grow our faith, share it with others, and serve God's people wherever the need is present. We are living God's love and all are invited!!!

**An Open and
Affirming
Congregation**

503 Stuart Circle
Richmond, Virginia 23220

Telephone:
804.358.9291

The Rev. Linda Higgins
Pastor

Email:
office@stjohnsrichmond.org



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stjohnsrichmond.org



Happy Easter!! Remember it is a season that lasts until June 9th, when we will celebrate Pentecost with our conference minister, Rev. Freeman Palmer. But in this wonderful season of resurrection, we have much to do.

On **May 2nd**, we need to come out in large numbers for our Nehemiah Action with RISC. Your presence makes a difference and as a church we have agreed to show up and help call the decision makers in Richmond to provide proven programs to deal with issues we have identified as most important to the health of the greater Richmond community. Please read more in this newsletter and come.

On **May 4th** some of us will be at Potomac Association meeting working on passing by-laws and some will be packing **Comfort Cases** so foster children in Richmond can move with the dignity of their own belongings in luggage, not a garbage bag. These are all opportunities for the church to be the church in a visible way.

On **May 18th** we have been invited to celebrate with Chris and Scott at their nuptials as they celebrate their love and later in the evening, we are invited to the Interfaith Iftar. *(There is more information in the Newsletter)*

For worship we will be in the sanctuary through the Season of Easter, but we will not have AC as the air handler is not yet repaired, so please dress accordingly. On, May 12th, Good Shepard Sunday, The Rev. Beverly Lindsey will preach.

This is the season of Resurrection. What parts of you need to be resurrected this year?

In Love,

The Rev. Linda Higgins, Pastor



“Our Reflections”

The fire at Notre Dame Cathedral during Holy Week, as tragic as it was, preceded perhaps the more heartbreaking news of the attacks in Catholic churches in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. As of this writing over 350 people have been killed with hundreds more wounded. It is shocking and hard to wrap one's head around what it must have been like for worshipers to gather on ostensibly the holiest, most joyous day in our lives as Christians, only to experience violence seeking to destroy mind, soul, and body.

Times have changed regarding houses of worship since my youth. It appears that sanctuaries are becoming not places of refuge from, but targets of, unholy violence. From what we have seen on Easter in Colombo, Sri Lanka as well as three churches housing African American congregations in Louisiana, Sutherland Springs TX, Charleston SC, Pittsburgh PA, and Christ Church New Zealand, faith communities are increasingly not immune to the violence and terror fueled by the evils of racism, xenophobia, and religious discrimination. Violence and terror anywhere is horrific. Yet that horror somehow feels more acute when it occurs in places where people of faith, all faiths, gather to worship.

It was an Easter Sunday such as this that makes the message of Easter all the more meaningful. It is important, and our call, to grieve with and pray for the victims and families of the church bombings on Easter Sunday and all people in all houses of worship rocked by evil manifest in violence. Yet it is equally important to both remember and live out what Jesus' resurrection means for us in these days and times. Jesus' rising from that tomb still means that death does not have the last word over life, that evil does not have the last word over good, that injustice does not have the last over justice, and that violence and terror do not have the last word over peace. The message of Easter is, without exception, for all people. I pray as we journey into Eastertide that we, as the body of the Risen Christ, will work as a resurrected people for God's vision of A Just World for all. In such a world, all can gather to worship, on Easter and any day, in the peace, security, and well-being of God's Shalom.

If you would like to read a joint statement from the United Church of Christ, Christian Church Disciples of Christ, and the Church of the American Ceylon in Sri Lanka go to:

[http://www.ucc.org/
news_global_ministries_sri_lankan_partner_condemn_heinous_easter_sunday_bombings_04
222019](http://www.ucc.org/news_global_ministries_sri_lankan_partner_condemn_heinous_easter_sunday_bombings_04222019)

Rev. Freeman Palmer

CENTRAL ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

RISC Nehemiah Action Assembly

Thursday, May 2, 2019

7:00-8:30pm

Good Shepherd Baptist Church

1127 N 28th Street

Doors 6:15pm

Music & Fellowship 6:30pm

Free Childcare 6:30pm

Get your free Action pass:

RISCaction2019.eventbrite.com

Free tickets also available at the door

It's time to take action!

Showing up at the Action makes a difference—show our community's decision-makers how many people care about creating a Richmond region where everyone thrives!

Stand for justice with the RVA faith community!

Get clear commitments to stop Richmond's eviction crisis!

All Richmond families deserve safe, affordable housing and freedom from the lasting impacts of eviction. Together, we'll ask for proven, effective resources for our City!

Press for proven solutions in reading & trauma response—**impact thousands of RVA kids!**

Hear the latest on the healthcare jobs pipeline led by VCU Health & job-seeker success stories.

Practice solidarity with more than 1,000 people of diverse religions, races, and regions. This doesn't happen every day! We can only win changes for our community when we work together!

Learn about the **impact of Reading Mastery in Richmond Public Schools** and potential for more growth!



RISC NEHEMIAH ACTION ASSEMBLY

Take action for root-level change in RVA with 1,200 justice-seekers!

Together we will:

Stop the eviction crisis in our region
Ensure all children read & succeed
Stand for solutions to child trauma

Thursday, May 2—7pm; doors 6:15pm

Childcare 6:30pm—Choir 6:30pm

Good Shepherd Baptist Church

1127 N 28th Street

Get your FREE Action Pass:

RISCaction2019.eventbrite.com



God is still speaking,

Official Call to The Potomac Association 2019 Spring Meeting

TO: Delegates of the Local Churches and Authorized Ministers of the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference-United Church of Christ

FROM: The Board of Directors, Potomac Association
Rev. Anne Holmes, Moderator, Potomac Association
Rev. Marvin Silver, Associate Conference Minister

ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Delegates and Authorized Ministers of the Potomac Association are called to the 2019 Spring Meeting.

United Christian Parish
703-620-3065
11508 North Shore Drive
Reston, Virginia 20190-4316
www.UCPreston.org

Accessibility – all spaces accessible via elevator ramp and/or automatic doors, all bathrooms, hearing amplification system

Saturday, May 4, 2019
8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.
\$15.00 Registration Fee

(Registration Fee includes Registration, Continental Breakfast and Lunch)

Please contact Robert Faison to register:
associatemoderatorpa@gmail.com

RVA

Voices from the
Holy Land
Film Series 2019



**Shady Grove
United Methodist Church**
Short Pump

Life in Occupied Palestine

Sunday May 5th 2:00 pm

Free Event Open To All

Shady Grove United Methodist Church in Short Pump

4825 Pouncey Tract Rd, Glen Allen

Fellowship Hall



Occupation. Separation Wall. Checkpoints. Travel Permits. Settlements. We read these words weekly in the news from the Holy Land. What do they mean? What do they mean to the everyday lives of Israelis and Palestinians?

Anna Baltzer, a Jewish-American Columbia graduate and Fulbright scholar, presents her discoveries as a volunteer with the International Women's Peace Service in the West Bank, documenting human rights abuses and supporting Palestinian-led nonviolent resistance to the Occupation. Baltzer's presentation provides those interested in the Israel/ Palestine conflict with critical information and documentation that can be difficult to obtain through mainstream Western media sources, and to encourage dialog towards taking action on the issue.

Q&A Discussion following the film screening moderated by
Raymond Haddad, MD, retired physician, and his son, Matthew Haddad

SUPPORTED BY: Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Richmond Friends Meeting ♦ Richmonders for Peace in Israel-Palestine ♦ Arab American Association of Central Virginia ♦ Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Glen Allen ♦ Al Madina School of Richmond ♦ Muslim Community Center of Chesterfield ♦ Shady Grove United Methodist Church in Short Pump ♦ St. John's Richmond United Church of Christ ♦ First Mennonite Church of Richmond ♦ Interfaith Community of Greater Richmond ♦ First Congregational Christian United Church of Christ ♦ First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond ♦ Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace ♦ Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace ♦ Central Atlantic Conference Palestine-Israel Network of UCC ♦ Bon Air Presbyterian Church

shadygroveumc.net
voicesfromtheholylnd.org

Facebook.com/ShadyGroveUMCShortPump
Facebook.com/voicesholyland

SAVE THE DATE for our third annual *Ramadan Interfaith Potluck Iftar* to be held at Bon Air Presbyterian Church on Saturday, May 18th. Once again, we will be raising money for a deserving organization, ANERA (American Near East Refugee Aid). They provide services to Palestinian refugees living in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, and the need is even greater this year. This is always a wonderful opportunity for the entire community to come together to mingle and share a meal with old and new friends. And the ANERA folks will be providing entertainment for everyone. This is a free event – just bring a dish, but we encourage you to also donate to a good cause.

3rd Annual Interfaith **Ramadan Potluck Iftar** #ServeHope for Palestinian Refugees



Traditional Arabic music
provided by Muath Edriss

RSVP at anera.org/richmond

This is a wonderful opportunity for the entire community to come together, mingle and share a meal with old and new friends while supporting Palestinian refugees!

Saturday, May 18, 2019

Open at 7:30 PM | Iftar starts at 8:17 PM

Bon Air Presbyterian Church
9201 W Huguenot Road
Richmond, VA

Free Event – Just bring a dish to share!



We encourage you to donate to Anera at the event to send food parcels to refugee families in Gaza and Lebanon this Ramadan season



COUNCIL MINUTES

Church Council met for their monthly meeting on Monday, April 8, 2019.

Finance – Mark Sousa and Don Warren agreed to be on the Audit Committee and complete the 2018 audit. Mark will take the lead. Jeff Michel will be available for questions regarding past audits. \$10,000 was moved from the money market account to the Vanco and checking accounts. Finance recommends during the May council meeting Council vote to request \$50,000 from Endowment to carry us over the summer. As noted in minutes over the last several months, Council will need to request money from Endowment for an honorarium for Helen Karnap as we are spending down money that she bequeathed. Betsy will be Finance Chair beginning in June.

Stewardship – Received another pledge for a total of \$97,000.

Restoration Committee – Proceeding with soliciting additional bids for the various immediate repairs. Met with contractor for roof repairs. Bids are being solicited for masonry repairs. Boiler inspection will week of April 8. Sarah Allen is going off Trustees and will be Trustee Emeritus. Jeff Hetzer will join Trustees. Expect to sign contract with Dunlop engineering this week.

Committee Updates:

Missions: Child Savers is the April mission and we are also collecting for Comfort Cases. We have a full table at the Equality Dinner, and eight people are signed up for the ACT's party. The Committee is seeking a mission that St. John's can do in the community and rather than just give money.

Worship and Music: Flowers will be ordered for Easter. Worship on Easter will be in the Sanctuary.

Congregational Life and Care: Donuts and coffee will be provided for Palm Sunday. There will be a light fellowship Easter Sunday. Faith Night at the Diamond is August 1.

Pastor's Report: New members will join on Easter Sunday.

Motions:

- Minutes – March 11, 2019 approved as submitted.
- New Members – Approved to accept new members: Sandy Keery, Andrea Miller, Vilma Seymour and Rick Sumner.



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

UCC ALL CHURCH READ ~ Pulitzer Prize-winning author Matthew Desmond, winner of numerous awards for his book which chronicles the lives of several families in the poorest neighborhoods in Milwaukee, will be the keynote speaker at the the United Church of Christ **General Synod 32** in June. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, a *New York Times* Bestseller, will also be the subject of the denomination's 2019 [All Church Read](#).

Evicted, based on years of embedded fieldwork and data, points to eviction as a root cause of poverty. Desmond's keynote address will take place in the same city as his book, on **Saturday, June 22** at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee. UCC congregations throughout the country are encouraged to organize book discussion groups around *Evicted* in ways and at times that best suit them and participate in the All Church Read. Everyone is invited to register to attend General Synod to hear Matthew Desmond's keynote or tune in to the live stream and listen to his address as a group or on your own.

Call to General Synod 32 — Join us in Milwaukee!

I am officially calling all delegates, visitors, and friends of the United Church of Christ to join us in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the 32nd General Synod, **June 21-25, 2019!**

The 32nd General Synod promises to be an inspiring and engaging event in the life of the Church. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Matthew Desmond, professor of Sociology at Princeton University and Pulitzer Prize winner for the book, "Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City."

We have inspiring preachers for the worship services. During Friday's Opening Worship Service, The Rev. Kaji Spellman Douša; Sunday's Community Worship Service, The Rev. Traci deVon Blackmon; Monday's Worship Service, The Rev. Sharon Mei-Shem MacArthur and for the Closing Worship Service, The Rev. Dr. Amy Butler.

We will also celebrate the ministries of retiring Associate General Minister for Global Engagement and Operations, Co-executive of Global Ministries, The Rev. Dr. Jim Moos and Mr. Don Hart, President and Chief Investment Officer, United Church Funds.

We will re-elect the General Minister and President and elect a new Associate General Minister for Global Engagement and Operations, Co-executive of Global Ministries.

I invite you to bring a spirit of love, of compassion, of openness and of hope with you. I look forward to seeing you in Milwaukee! Until then, let the light of the living Christ shine in and through you, and be known to all whom you meet along the way.

John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

MISSION



Our Mission of the Month for **May is "Feed More"**. Feed More's programs are dedicated to providing healthy meals and hope for a better tomorrow to Central Virginians who face hunger. With the support of the community, their programs distribute nutritious meals and wholesome food to those who need it most. With one in seven Central Virginians struggling with hunger, Feed More's programs aim to help our neighbors when they need a hand up.

Scott Siefert and Chris Wing have designated Feed More as an organization to donate to in lieu of wedding gifts. **Kathy Erhardt of Feed More** will be with us at worship on **Sunday, May 5th** to tell us more about the organization's important work to address hunger in our community.



Hosting intake for Caritas ended Friday, April 19. Volunteers from St. John's, First English Lutheran, and Church of the Good Shepherd showed up every night for six weeks. Thank you all for the food donations, the baked goods, the sliced vegetables, the fresh fruit, the many bottles of ranch dressing, the pots of coffee and pitchers of tea and lemonade. Thank you for showing up every night to make sure our guests had a place to rest and have a bite to eat before going to their shelter for the night. Thank you for making our guests and Caritas staff feel welcome after the end of a long day. Thank you for your kind words and encouragement to these ladies who are trying to find their way. Much more than the delicious food every night, we also provided an opportunity for fellowship for and with this lovely group of women. Thanks most of all to Vijaya for being there almost every night, for making sure everything ran smoothly, for passing along information about what was happening and what was needed, and for representing St. John's.



CARITAS BLANKET DRIVE

We have collected and delivered over 50 blankets to Caritas for the women's and family's shelters. The need is ongoing. Please place new or clean, gently used blankets in the bin in the Parlor.

St. John's UCC Events & Activism Highlights

Equality Virginia, The Palm Parade and E.R.A. Activism





RVA

Voices From the Holy Land

Film Series 2019

FILM SERIES – FREE Sundays – Public Invited

voicesfromtheholylan.org

Facebook.com/voicesholyland

Mar 10 **The Occupation of the
1:30 pm American Mind**

Richmond Friends Meetinghouse
4500 Kensington Ave., Richmond

Mar 24 **Roadmap to Apartheid**
2:00 pm

**Unitarian Universalist
Community Church of Glen Allen**
11105 Cauthorne Rd, Glen Allen

Apr 14 **The People and the Olive**
2:30 pm

Al Madina School of Richmond
10700 Academy Dr., Midlothian

May 5 **Life in Occupied Palestine**
2:00 pm

**Shady Grove United Methodist
Church in Short Pump**
4825 Pouncey Tract Rd, Glen Allen

June 9 **On the Side of the Road**
2:00 pm

**First Unitarian Universalist
Church of Richmond**
1000 Blanton Avenue, Richmond

SUPPORTED BY: Richmonders for Peace in Israel-Palestine ♦ Arab American Association of Central Virginia ♦ Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Glen Allen ♦ Al Madina School of Richmond ♦ Muslim Community Center of Chesterfield ♦ Shady Grove United Methodist Church in Short Pump ♦ First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond ♦ St. John's Richmond United Church of Christ ♦ First Mennonite Church of Richmond ♦ Interfaith Community of Greater Richmond ♦ First Congregational Christian United Church of Christ ♦ Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace ♦ Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace ♦ Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Richmond Friends Meeting ♦ Central Atlantic Conference Palestine-Israel Network of UCC



"The Fellowship" will meet for lunch on Thursday, May 9, 2019 at Firebirds Wood Fired Grill, 11448 Belvedere Vista Lane, Richmond, Virginia 23235. All are welcome to come. For information, please contact Lynda Merry @ 804-756-0270 or Beth Stiegler @ 804-272-3792.



Mark Your Calendars Now! Congregational Life and Care is sponsoring "Faith Night" at the Diamond with the Richmond Flying Squirrels, being held on **Thursday, August 1st at 6:30 pm**. Come early for live music, pre-game dance performances and player testimonials. Enjoy fireworks from up close and inside the fences after the game. **Tickets are \$11.00** and may be purchased from Betsy

Bighinatti. Tickets are limited so purchase them now to be sure you are included in the evening. Join our St. John's family for a fun evening.



On Saturday, May 18, 2019 at 4:00 o'clock pm, St. John's Members Chris Wing and Scott Siefert will be married at St. John's United Church of Christ. If you have signed up, they will be sending you an email or text confirmation. If you have not signed up and wish to attend, please contact Chris at: 612-790-0521.

**For Pentecost
Sunday
we will be joined by
the members of
First
Congregational
Christian Church
UCC**



JUNE 9TH 2019

**PENTECOST
SUNDAY**

Mark Your Calendars!
Rev. Freeman L. Palmer, Conference Minister of the UCC Central Atlantic Conference, will be our special guest preacher on Pentecost Sunday, June 9, 2019 at 10:00 am. Please keep watch for updated information



Comfort Cases Packing Party
"A Day of Outreach"
Saturday, May 4, 2019

Last year 12 St John's folks volunteered to help stuff duffel bags for Comfort Cases and we had a GREAT time. In case it's slipped your mind, Comfort Cases is a nation-wide organization helping children entering the foster care system in the US. Nearly every child comes to foster care due to a domestic emergency without anything to call their own. Rather than the plastic trash bag most travel with, Comfort Cases provides nearly half a million kids with their own special pack, stocked full of age appropriate intimate apparel, blankets and toiletries. For most it is all they have when suddenly their world changes dramatically and they are traumatically removed from their homes for their protection.

Last year we here at St. John's helped pack 1200 duffels/backpacks in about 4 hours, each with a personal note of encouragement for the recipient. **Saturday, May 4**, is this year's packing 'party'. Once again the St. John's family will be partnering with Comfort Cases in their mission, to show these kids they still matter, that someone still cares about them. We will be joining with others at Second Baptist Church located at River Road and Gaskins beginning at 10 am. Like last year, a light lunch will be served.

Even if you can't help pack, you can still help Comfort Cases in their mission. There will be a box in fellowship hall to collect needed items. Those items this year include:

Spring/Summer PJ's- All Sizes

Hygiene items - Age appropriate full or travel size shampoo, body wash, etc.

no hotel samples please

Books (age appropriate) New or Gently Used



Comfort Cases will gladly accept the following NEW items throughout the year:

BABY - Newborn to 23 months

Backpack or Diaper/Tote Bag (must zip closed)

Pajamas

Baby Blanket

Baby-safe Stuffed Animal

Baby Shampoo, Baby Body Wash, Baby Lotion, Diaper Wipes, Diaper Ointment OR

Baby Powder (put together in a zip-locking bag) ***travel-sized toiletries only please***

2 washcloths

1 baby bib

1 board book

Comfort XL (32.5 inch duffel bag folded to fit inside the Comfort Case)

CHILD - Ages 2-9

Backpack or duffel bag (must zip closed)

Pajamas (Sizes 2T-9)

Blanket (up to 50 x 60 inches)

Stuffed Animal (if age 2 or 3, stuffed animal must be toddler safe!)

Toothbrush and Toothpaste (put together in one zip-locking bag)

Shampoo, Conditioner, Body Lotion, and Soap or Body Wash (put together in another zip locking bag) ***travel-sized toiletries only please***

Book - books should be new or like new and age appropriate

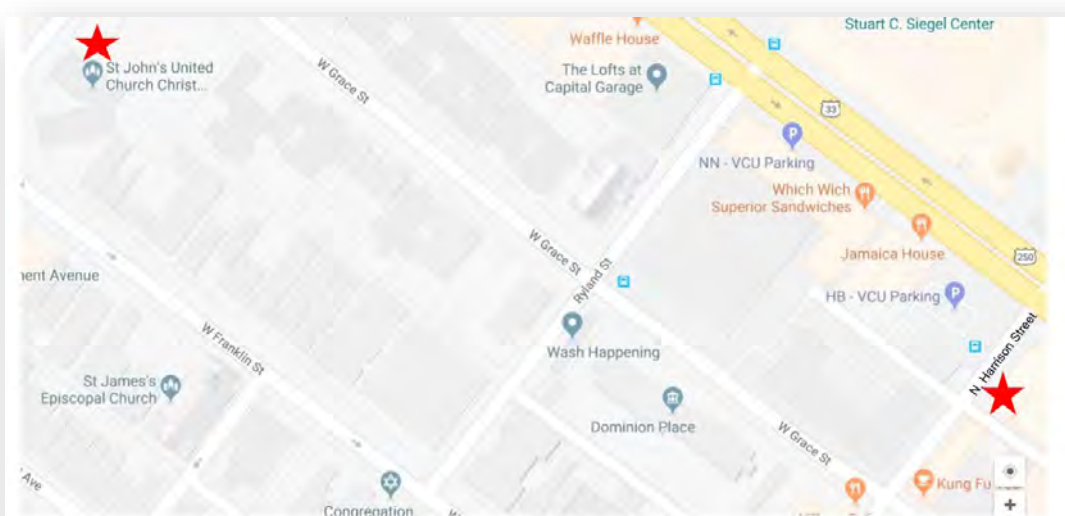
Coloring Book

Crayons

Comfort XL (32.5 inch duffel bag folded to fit inside the Comfort Case)



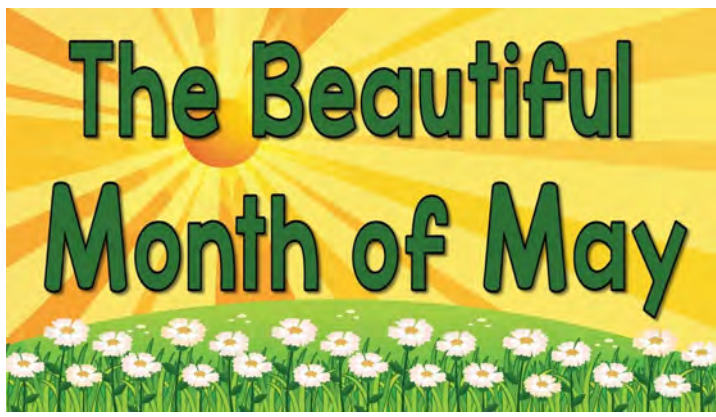
Sunday parking is available at the VCU deck located at Broad and Harrison Streets. You will receive a ticket to access parking. Shuttle service is available one hour before service to transport members and guests from the parking lot to church and at the church following service and coffee hour. The bar code to use as you exit the parking lot, so you do not pay for parking, **is on the weekly bulletin cover**. Parking is also available on Sundays from 7 am to 2 pm on the island side of Monument Avenue. For more information, call the office at 358-9291.



St. Johns Church Shuttle

The vans will pick up at the parking structure at 534 N. Harrison Street and transport to the alley behind the church. **Shuttle service from parking structure to church begins at 9:00 am and will run until 10:15 am.**

After the church services are complete the shuttle will begin transporting the congregation from the alley behind the church back to the parking structure at 534 N. Harrison Street. **The return shuttle will begin at 11:30 am and run until 12:15.**



Volunteer Ministries

Ministry	May 5 Team 2	May 12 Team 2	May 19 Team 3	May 26 Team 3
Welcome Team Leader	Lynn Snyder	Lynn Snyder	Pam Miller	Pam Miller
Sound System	Will Atkinson	Will Atkinson	Bruce Miller	Bruce Miller
Tellers	Rob Osborn Tony Sharpenstein	Jeff Michel Beverly Lindsey	Bud Higgins Beverly Lindsey	Jeff Jacobs Scott Siefert
Liturgist	Marcie Agee			
Facilities	Jeff Hetzer	Jeff Hetzer	Bill Watson	Bill Watson
Altar Guild	Erin Burnette Georgianne Stinnette	Lynda Merry	Johanna Gilbert Charlotte Quick	Helen Bunch
Fellowship Hosts		Andrea & Rick	Beth & Don Stiegler	Andrea & Rick
Altar Flowers				

Teller Coordinator:
Bud Higgins
804-301-5059

Fellowship Host Coordinator:
Rev. Beverly Lindsey
804-275-7165



Please find a substitute if you are unable to perform your ministry and contact your Team Coordinator AND the office to let them know who will be filling in for you. Thank you for making our church ministries run smoothly!

May 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 6:30 pm RISC Nehemiah Action Assembly @ Good Shepherd	3	4 Comfort Cases Packing Potomac Association Mtg.
5 10 am Worship Mission Moment for Feed More Mission Outreach Meeting "May Birthdays" Reception	6 5:30 pm Finance Team Meeting	7	8	9 1 pm The Fellowship Luncheon @ Firebirds Wood Fire Grill	10	11
12 10 am Worship "Mother's Day" Rev. Beverly Lindsey Preaching Cong. Life/Care Mtg.	13 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting	14	15	16	17	18 4 pm Chris & Scott's Wedding
19 10 am Worship	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 10 am Worship	27	28	29	30	31	

Meetings are Subject to Change

10 Donique McIntosh
12 Charlie Weaver
15 Trey Lyle
17 David Agee
17 Sanya Young
22 Henry Martin
23 Sharon Voelcker
24 Travis Schaefer
26 Emily Pittman

28 Don Stiegler
29 Elisabeth Burnette
29 Beth Stiegler
30 Jennifer Martin



If you are celebrating a birthday
 in the month of May,
 please join us on Sunday May 5th
 in the Fellowship Hall for a special coffee hour to honor you!