

Baptist in
Heritage,
Ecumenical
in Worship
and Outreach



The Spire

River Road Church, Baptist

October 7, 2003, Vol. 57, No. 40

**RIVER ROAD CHURCH,
BAPTIST**
8000 River Road
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 288-1131 (office)
(804) 282-9172 (fax)
www.rrcb.org

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

Every member of River Road Church, Baptist, like every disciple of Christ, is commissioned to participate in Christian ministry. The following persons have been called by this congregation to serve as enablers in such ministry:

Cecil E. Sherman
Interim Pastor

E. Carl Freeman
Music

Robert L. Dibble
Adults

Chester L. Phelps, Jr.
Students

Barbara J. Massey
Children

George S. Davis
Church Administrator

Margaret S. Collins
Preschool Director

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

October 12, 2003
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Sanctuary

Sermon by Mr. Mack Dennis
Anthems by the Carol, Crusader and Chancel Choirs

Reception in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service hosted by the deacons.

CHORAL EVENSONG

The Chancel Choir
5:00 p.m. Sanctuary

Reception following in the Fellowship Hall



CALLED BUSINESS MEETING OCTOBER 15

The Board of Trustees has called for a church business meeting to be held on Wednesday evening, October 15, following the church dinner. The purpose of the meeting will be to adopt budget goals for the church for the year 2004.

The called meeting will also afford opportunity to elect messengers for the Baptist General Association of Virginia which will meet November 14 and 15 in Richmond, and to the meeting of the Richmond Baptist Association on October 19, at Monument Heights Baptist Church. The church is entitled to fifteen messengers to the General Association and 8 messengers to the Richmond Association. Persons wishing to serve as messengers to either meeting should call the church office so that arrangements may be made for their nomination. Nominations also may be offered from the floor at the church business meeting.

Finally, the Board of Missions will recommend a revision to the Constitution and By-Laws to establish a new standing committee of the church, Transportation Committee. The first reading will be given at the business meeting.

All members are encouraged to attend the called meeting. The session will follow the 5:30 Wednesday dinner in the Fellowship Hall, convening at about 6:15 p.m. and will precede the program scheduled for that evening.

Stewardship 2004

DOES IT MATTER?

Each fall River Road makes a run at pledging a budget for the year to come. It's fall. It's time to pledge the budget. Some are less than excited about this prospect. Who can "get up" for pledging a budget? For some it's a little bit like getting up for a case of the flu. Knowing this, I want to offer some reasons for taking this effort seriously and doing a good job of it.

1. We don't have a "regular pastor." In this article I'm speaking as a pastor, but you and I know I'm a temporary. Our church is in an "in-between" time. This is no time for weakness. A poor pledging effort will hurt this church next year.
2. The ministry of River Road is directly dependent upon gifts from her members. If we don't give, the church can't do what she is supposed to do. When we are "cash strapped," we don't go to Dominion Power and negotiate. We pay that bill. We cut on literature for Bible study, mission trips for youth, maintenance of our property. When things are tight, we cut the good stuff, the church stuff.
3. What are the chances the new pastor will come into office preaching about stewardship? About one in a million. Probably the new pastor will not come down hard on this subject for several years. If this guess be so, then I need to do a good job of

addressing both stewardship and pledging; it will have to hold for awhile. Consider the following numbers . . .

- ❖ River Road has 2,200 members (about 1,100 giving units . . . a husband and wife are one giving unit).
- ❖ 450 family units pledge; these people give 90% of our money. Only \$62,000 came from non-pledgers last year.
- ❖ 500 giving units give nothing.
- ❖ The average unit gift at River Road is \$2,920 a year.

It is obvious that a sizeable part of our membership does not hold that giving is an expected part of church membership. That needs to change on biblical grounds. Jesus had a lot to say about money; money is a god-rival and needs to be challenged.

4. Not too long from now our Search Committee will be in serious conversation with the person they want to be our next pastor. If that person is smart, he/she will ask, "May I see your budget?" And a budget will come forth. Then that person will ask, "is this budget funded?" What we do in the next six weeks will determine the answer our committee can give. We need to strengthen their hand. If the committee can say, "Yes, and then

some," you will shift the ground in that conversation. If you give little or nothing, I want you to start. If you have not been a pledger, I want you to sign on. A pledge is not a note at the bank. It is a statement of intent. It serves two good purposes: it commits you, and most of you are promise-keepers. If you say you are going to do something, you usually do it. It locks you in. That's not bad; it's the fence you need to make you perform. It gives the finance committee of this church solid material to work from. When you pledge, you say you know and care about the life and work of this church. The finance committee can move with confidence when you show that you care.

The budget is up 10%. That's a stretch. But it's a stretch from what we have been doing. The finance committee is believing in both the mission of our church (and attempting to underwrite it) AND they are believing in the membership. They know we can give it . . . if we will. Does it matter that we pledge this budget? Yes. It takes the temperature of the membership; it is a pretty accurate measure of our dedication. Yes. It funds the mission of River Road Church. Yes. It strengthens the Search Committee's hand. So let's do this job right.

—Cecil E. Sherman

A GIFT OF THE HEART

Recently I spoke at the annual meeting of a dead church! It has no pastor. It has no congregation. It has no missions or educational program. It never has a church service except for once a year when "Mt. Zion Day" is observed at the historical building out in the countryside near Martinsburg, West Virginia.

In 1835 Baptists in Northern Virginia (for this was pre-war Virginia after all)

"looking over the destitute parts of the State, their attention was called to the necessities of the people in Berkeley and Jefferson counties for regular and faithful Baptist preaching." A missionary was sent into the area and Mt. Zion Baptist Church was planted.

In preparation for my visit to the dead church, I read every word of its old church minutes. I was amazed at how the church had been a beacon for decades,

how it early caught the spirit of missions giving, how it sent out colonies to plant other churches, how it was an effective Baptist witness in its setting. It had been a good church. The congregation was nourishing and supporting. The deacons were expected to know the people well enough to report any cases of need among the members. Several persons were called into the ministry at this church.

(Continued on insert)

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is expressed to **Marguerite McClellan** and family upon the death of her husband, **Hearst McClellan**, on September 28.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is expressed to **Sandy** and **Ed Thornton** upon the death of her brother, **G. H. Saunders**, on October 3, in Lovington, Virginia.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is expressed to **Ann** and **Tom Kirkup** and family upon the death of her mother and to **Christopher Kirkup** and **Katherine Hall** upon the death of their grandmother, **Florence Barden**, on October 4.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY is expressed to **Elsie Fusco** and family upon the death of her brother, **Perry Mowbray**, on October 6.



Memorial Service

Dr. Woorow W. Hasty
Saturday, November 1
11:00 a.m. Sanctuary

Many people have expressed an interest in assisting with the reception following the memorial service. Please contact **Arlene Perry**, 747-6794, or **John Moreau**, 353-5939, if you would like to assist with refreshments or with the actual hosting of the reception.

THE MOMS' GROUP will meet for dinner at Short Pump Town Center on Tuesday, October 21, at 6:30 p.m. Please join us for the evening. *R S V P* to Theresa Price at 559-4677.

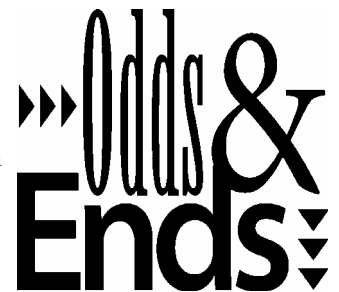
THE MORNING BRIDGE GAME will held on Thursday, October 16, at 10:00 a.m., in the Reception Room. The hostess will be **Alyne Kennedy**, 740-8629.

THE BOOK LOVERS' GROUP will meet on Thursday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m., in the Reception Room. This month's selection is The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd, and the discussion will be led by **Sue Hodder**. Everyone is welcome. For more information about River Road's book group, call **Kitty Davis**, 285-9782.

UP NEXT - LAND THOU - MARTIN BUBER'S CLASSIC! The **Modern Theologian Discussion Group** will next look at Buber's short but extremely significant work that argues for an ethic that does not use people (or God), and does not consider them objects of one's own personal experience. We must learn to consider everything around us as "you" speaking to "me," and requiring a response. The group will meet on **Thursday, October 16, in the parlor at 7:30 p.m.** Even if you have not had a chance to read the book, come and participate in an interesting and lively discussion. Visitors are always welcome. Call **George Davis** at the church, 288-1131, for more information.

CALLING ALL FISHERMEN AND FISHERWOMEN! NOVEMBER 22 IS THE DATE! The sound you hear off in the distance is that ever appealing call of rockfish waiting to be caught. They're not in our neighborhood yet, but they're coming and we'll be ready! We already have a boat booked for Saturday, November 22, when the big ones will be swimming around and checking out the Chesapeake Bay. Call **George Davis** at the church, 288-1131, if you think landing a 25-pound rockfish sounds like fun.

CROP WALK: We walk with the world . . . in parts of Africa . . . Cropwalkers walk to help communities drill borehold wells that reach deep into the aquifer, and to provide emergency food and drought-resistant seed for replanting. **Please sponsor a Walker today.** For more information contact **Arlene Perry**, 747-6794. Contributions may be sent to the church office, payable to CROP Walk.



Missions

WMU WOMEN ON MISSION DAY GROUP: The Day Group will meet on Tuesday, October 14, at 10:00 a.m. in the Reception Room. Edward S. Stratton, Jr., Treasurer and Business Manager of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, will be the speaker. Coffee and refreshments will be served. Members are reminded to bring canned goods and nonperishable food items for the Baptist centers' food pantries. Visitors are welcome!

WMU WOMEN ON MISSION EVENING GROUP: The Evening Group will meet on Tuesday, October 14, at 7:30 p.m., in the home of Clarice Dibble. Kevin Moreley, a photographer for the Richmond Times Dispatch, will be the speaker. Members are reminded to bring canned goods and nonperishable food items for the Baptist centers' food pantries. Come join us for an evening of fellowship and learning and for a chance to admire Clarice's new kitchen. For more information contact **Wyatt Heisler** at 741-9320 or **Clarice Dibble** at 965-0647.

NEXT ISH CAMPAIGN: OCTOBER 1-31 WARM WINTER COATS AND JACKETS—River Road Church will collect new and like-new warm winter coats and jackets for infants, children, and youth through age 17 throughout the month of October. If you have outgrown coats or jackets in good condition for this age group, we would be happy to have them. If you would like to purchase these items, we would be happy to have them, too. Contributions may be taken to the Shepherd-Simpson Bible Study Class on Sunday mornings or to the church office during the week. If you are not able to shop for these items, but would like to contribute money to purchase them, **Charlotte** and **Bill Simpson**, 285-3185, will shop for you.

WEDNESDAY DINNER PROGRAM

October 15, 2003

5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Program

ARTS Festival 2003
"Nathan the Nervous"

This special program concludes the ARTS 2003 Festival. Come enjoy a wonderful performance by the youth of River Road Church. Please call the church office, 288-1131, for dinner reservations.

Dinner Menu: The adults will have pork loin, twice-baked potatoes, green beans, salad bar, rolls, and apple cobbler with ice cream. The children will have chicken fingers, french fries, salad bar, rolls and ice cream.

A Gift of the Heart

(Continued from page #)

Along the way, something happened. Maybe it was economics or demographics. Maybe it was just too far out in the country. The last reports showed about 20 members in 1918 and finally there just were no more reports. But for years, the faithful old families gathered once a year. The men would clear the brush from the graveyard. The women and children would wash the straight-back benches. The brave would chase out the snakes. And for a single day, Mt. Zion would come to life again.

A few years ago the old one-room stone building had fallen on hard times. The roof was in bad shape. The floor was

falling through. A small group of concerned folks began to do the impossible. They gave of their own funds and put on a new roof and repaired the floor. They spruced up the grounds. Today the building is in pristine condition.

During the annual meeting, several persons stood and gave Baptist-style testimonies. One leader of the restoration said: "This place was really a mess! None of us were geared for this. We had no money but we got together and decided that something had to be done. We could not let it deteriorate nor could we just patch it piecemeal. We took pledges and in time we started." Another said: "I hope that before I go to

my heavenly home I will hear the gospel preached here one more time!"

Mt. Zion may be dead but the spirit of its trustees is very much alive. Those good people who pledged, paid, scrubbed, painted and nailed did it all for more than just an old stone building in the woods. They did it as "a gift of the heart." If folks will do that for an extinct church, surely members of a vibrant living church can understand stewardship.

— Fred Anderson

ARTS 2003
Arts in a Sacred Place

CHORAL EVENSONG
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2003
5:00 p.m. SANCTUARY

ARTS 2003 Festival Week will conclude with a Choral Evensong



RIVER ROAD CHURCH
BAPTIST

A WORD ON CHORAL EVENSONG

The service of Evensong is part of the church's continuous worship. It is continuous in two senses. First, along with Mattins, which as its name implies is said in the morning and much like our Sunday morning worship, Evensong is said in churches and cathedrals every evening throughout the year. Secondly, the roots of this service lie in the pattern of monastic worship, which began to develop as the Christian faith developed. Evensong is a celebration of the incarnation of Jesus, the unique event in which God became a part of human life by becoming human. The Psalms, which are a part of this service, were also part of Jewish worship. They were part of the prayer of the community, which looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Also a part of this service is a choral setting of the Magnificat, the Song of Mary, which she said joyfully as she became aware that she was to be the mother of Jesus; it was through her that God was to come into the world. Another sung setting is the nunc Dimittis, the song of Simeon. In it, Simeon, a man "righteous and devout" recognizes that the child, Jesus was the Messiah, expected by the Jews and come to be the salvation of all. In Choral Evensong words and music come together, each enriching the other, in order that our senses and intellects, our hearts and our minds, may help us draw closer to God who is above all, and through all, and in all. As a part of this Choral Evensong, the clergy of River Road Church will read the service, and our Chancel Choir will sing the musical settings and the congregation will participate in the prayers, liturgy and hymns.

TIME TO "SPRUCE UP" THE CHURCH! **FALL WORKDAY**

OCTOBER 11
8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

The House and Grounds Committee has scheduled a workday for Saturday, October 11, from 8:30 a.m. until noon. Raking, trimming, and weeding are just some of the tasks that the committee hopes will be accomplished that morning to help make the church look a little nicer. Call **George Davis** at the church, 288-1131, with any questions.

Children's Ministry News

DISCOVERY CLASSES BEGIN

What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a church member? What is communion? When can I participate in communion?

Parents of third, fourth and fifth graders, has your child asked you these questions? Beginning in November a DISCOVERY CLASS will be offered for children who are exploring the answers to these questions. Participation in this class does not necessarily mean children are ready to make the decision to become a Christian and member of the church. This will simply be a time of questions and answers and exploration.

Two classes of two weeks each will be offered. The first Discovery class will meet on Sunday afternoons, **November 2 and November 9**. The second classes will be **December 7 and December 14**. The classes will meet 5:00-6:00.

Please call Barbara Massey, 288-1131, to register your third, fourth, or fifth grader in one of these classes.

GREAT OPPORTUNITY!

Would you be willing to substitute occasionally for preschool and/or children's teachers in Sunday School? If so, please call **Barbara Massey**, 288-1131, to indicate your willingness to do so. We promise not to call you too often to substitute!

Student Ministry News

SUNDAY EVENING YOUTH FELLOWSHIPS: This Sunday the youth fellowship will discover their leadership style by taking a questionnaire. Combined with the "gifts" questionnaire, youth will have an indication of how their talents and gifts can best be used. The fellowship will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

"Sanctuary" will be open on Sundays and Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Audrey Thomson will provide snack supper, in the Chapel Hall, at 6:00 p.m. Please remember that snack supper cost is \$2.00.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

October 17	"Sleep in the Box Night"	5:30 p.m.-8:00 a.m.
October 19	Crop Walk Sunday	

"LAST CALL" - ATTENTION PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Please return your card with your child's college address, telephone number and e-mail address. We would like to be able to contact them as the fall progresses.

Sunday Responsibilities

Acolyte: Matthew Fields-Johnson

Deacons Coffee: John Gordon, Kristen Phelps, Rob Spicer, Don Thomson

Flower Distribution: Cathy Carlock, Diane Shoemake

Greeters: Betty Balentine, Jean Cauble, Doug Pace, Lee Perkins

Sound: George Davis

Tellers: Vara Bottoms, Jean Cauble, Jerry Crute, Carol Decker, Pat Dickinson, Ann Domyan, Holly Smith

Ushers: Jule Bolio, Ron Clevenger, Skip King, Jon Williams

Minister On Call

Weekend: October 11-12

Robert Dibble
965-0647

If you are unable to reach this minister immediately, please leave a message on the church office voicemail at 288-1131. The voicemail will be monitored by the on-call minister.

Adult Sunday School News

Formations Sunday School literature continues a four-lesson unit of study entitled “*Stewardship: A Way of Living.*” Great News! Stewardship can be an exciting topic of consideration for Christians. Certainly, stewardship relates to money, and, yes, we need to tithe. However, stewardship branches out into multiple areas of life. Properly practiced, this act of service can lead to peace and purpose in living. Each day, millions of people try diligently to control their lives. They plan, implement, scheme, invest, position themselves, and plunge forward in life. However, while planning is necessary, none of us can control all the aspects of our lives. This unit of study concentrates on the scope of stewardship. We will address the topic of money and sacrificial giving because our spiritual gifts contribute to God’s kingdom and to personal contentment. Stewardship is a beautiful requirement for the Christian that can make a difference in our lives and in the lives of those around us. God desires a stewardship life for us. When we are ready to accept the call, God will provide the strength to serve. This week’s lesson, entitled “*The True Meaning of Life,*” is based on Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 and Hebrews 13:1-6 and is studied in the following classes:

Fellowship Class will be taught by **Tom Warrington.**

Lydia Class will be taught by **Libbie Geiger.**

Reuben Alley Class will be taught by **Henry Langford.**

Seekers Class will be taught by **Linda Schreiner.** The Fall Social will be held at the home of Linda and Serge Schreiner, 412 Dellbrooks Place, on Saturday, October 18, at 6:30 p.m.

TwentySomethings Class will be taught by **Mack Dennis.**

Discussion Class—The class will discuss “Asking for and receiving help. How to recognize when you need help? How do we handle the stress when we are the primary giver?” The class will have a potluck dinner on Saturday, November 1, at the home of Sam and Julia Nixon.

Explorers Class—**Betsy Heggie** will lead a discussion of part three in our continuing study of “Discovering the Psalms: Passion, Promise and Praise.” The class will meet in its new location: the Tellers Room #250.

Friendship Class—**Connie Showalter** will discuss “The Meaning of Life.”

Journey Class—**Susan Rucker** will lead the class discussion. The class will hold a “Mexican Fiesta” on October 18, at the home of **Pam and Mike Hern.** The sign-up sheet is in the classroom.

Life Class—The class will continue a series on “Biblical Examples of Courage” This week’s lesson is based on an examination of the movie “Signs.” **Ken Lantz** will lead the discussion. The class will view “To Kill a Mockingbird” on Saturday, October 11, at 7:00 p.m., at the home of **Rob and Martha Taylor.** Everyone is invited to bring snacks to share with the group.

Phoenix Class—We will read chapters two and three in our text “The Transformation of American Religion.” The class will have a pot-luck dinner at the home of **Henry and Betty Rose McGee** on Sunday, October 12, at 6:30 p.m. Call Betty Rose, 754-1412, for more information.

Robert Smart Class—The class continues its study of the Gospel of Matthew. Focus for Sunday is Matthew 5. **Bob Shoemake** will teach the class. All young adults, 25-40-somethings—married and not—are invited to join the class.

Shepherd-Simpson Bible Study Class—The class will resume its study of the Gospel of John this Sunday, commencing with 12:23, Jesus’ final discourse to the public in John.

Bob Shepherd will teach the lesson. The class celebrates its fall social on Saturday, October 11, at the home of **Ann and Gus Sledge.**

October

UPCOMING EVENTS

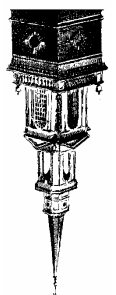
Friday, October 10	ARTS 2003—Arts & Crafts Exhibit , Fellowship Hall
Saturday, October 11	ARTS 2003—Arts & Crafts Exhibit , Fellowship Hall “Nathan the Nervous” Rehearsal , 1:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Sunday, October 12	ARTS 2003—Arts & Crafts Exhibit , Fellowship Hall “Nathan the Nervous” Rehearsal , 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall ARTS 2003—Choral Evensong , 5:00 p.m., Sanctuary Adult Bible Study , 6:00 p.m., Assembly Room Board of Christian Education , 7:30 p.m., Church Parlor
Monday, October 13	“Nathan the Nervous” Rehearsal , 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Civil War Forum , 7:00 p.m., Journey Classroom
Tuesday, October 14	River Roadsters to Lancaster, Pennsylvania , 7:00 a.m., north parking lot WMU Day Group , 10:00 a.m., Reception Room History Committee , 3:30 p.m., Archives Room “Nathan the Nervous” Rehearsal , 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall WMU Evening Group , 7:30 p.m., home of Clarice Dibble
Wednesday, October 15	Stephen Ministry Supervision , 4:00 p.m., Archives Room Called Church Business Meeting , 6:15 p.m., Fellowship Hall ARTS 2003—Youth Drama , 6:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall Pastor Search Committee , 7:30 p.m., Church Parlor
Thursday, October 16	Morning Bridge , 10:00 a.m., Reception Room Theologians Discussion Group , 7:30 p.m., Church Parlor
Friday, October 17	Fifth Quarter & Sleep-in-a-Box , Courtyard and Fellowship Hall
Sunday, October 19	CROP Walk Lunch , 12:00 noon, Chapel Hall Nominating Committee , 5:00 p.m., Church Parlor MCC , 5:00 p.m., Archives Room Recreation Committee , 5:00 p.m., Tellers Room Adult Bible Study , 6:00 p.m., Journey classroom Board of Administration , 7:00 p.m., Archives Room
Monday, October 20	Leadership Banquet , 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, October 21	Publicity Committee , 7:00 p.m., Church Parlor
Thursday, October 23	Book Lovers’ Group , 7:30 p.m., Reception Room

The Spire is published weekly, except the week of December 25, by River Road Church, Baptist, 8000 River Road, Richmond, VA 23229-8415, (804) 288-1131. Information for any newsletter may be brought to the church office or faxed to us at (804) 282-9172. Copy deadline is Monday, noon. Editors: Robert Dibble and Barbara Massey.

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