

CCHASM Thanksgiving Gift Cards

Thank you for your generosity!

We collected \$895 worth of gift cards to help out families this Thanksgiving season.

FAMILY ADVENT LUNCH

Sunday, December 5
(after worship)

Service of Gratitude

Wednesday, November 17

Dinner - 5:15 PM
Service - 6:30 PM

On **Wednesday, November 17** you are invited to Central's annual Thanksgiving Dinner followed by the quarterly Business Meeting and our Service of Gratitude. We will reflect on and share what we are most thankful for this year.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH MINISTRY NEWS

*Lessons and Carols w/
Children's Christmas Pageant*

Sunday, December 19

This Christmas season our choir will offer an evening of familiar carols and scriptures, and the congregation will be invited to sing along with us. Also, we will celebrate the birth of our Savior with a pageant presented by our children that same evening. Make sure you mark your calendar for this special night.

Sponsor a Child

Sponsor a child from PES this Christmas!

Contact Leslie to receive your family/child assignment.

Gifts Due by: Sunday, Dec. 12

Family Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

DECEMBER 24 @ 5 PM

The **Messenger**



"I have come as a light into the world so that everyone who believes in me won't live in darkness."

John 12:46

Letter from the Pastor:

Dear Friends,

I am writing these words from a place of quarantine. Christy and I are currently in quarantine because Ben is sick with COVID-19. Thank you so much for your prayers and love for him, and for us. We did not need another reminder that COVID is still with us, but here it is anyway. Mary Richerson, Stephen Richerson, and now Ben, have all had it, or are still dealing with it. Others of us have come in contact with those who have it. Or we are still dealing with the consequences of how it has affected our church and our world.

Those consequences are among the things that have highlighted some of the differences of opinion in our world. Considering that, I want to remind you that no matter what, we are united in our love for Jesus, and in his love for us. With that said, let me encourage you to participate in one of the listening sessions with Rev. Mike Clingenpeel, our consultant/coach from the Center for Healthy Churches. Mike is the former pastor of River Road Church, Baptist in Richmond. He loves the church, and he is here on behalf of the whole church.

Pastorally speaking, I feel that we, the church, need to speak words of comfort to one another and to the world around us. The world has seemed to “crumble” around us during the last 18 or 19 months. And yet, we know that God is with us. *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 8:38-39)

Amidst this crumbling, and our need to be empathetic towards one another, let me share an opinion piece that really spoke to me. It was written by my friend, Rev. Mary Elizabeth Hanchey.

“Being the church when the world is crumbling requires speaking comfort.

When the world is crumbling, everything is harder than it should be. Routines become more complicated. Chores become more stressful.

Sometimes, tasks are simply more difficult because of external limitations. Because of geographic constraints, because the line to get into the grocery store wraps around the building or because work must be done in a new space using new technology that doesn’t work in clutch moments.

Sometimes, tasks seem impossible because of a dearth of emotional energy; because fatigue makes it utterly impossible to remember details or make decisions, because the barrage of fear and uncertainty and more bad news is debilitating, and executive functioning gives up and goes home.

People are raw and weary. And quite possibly furious.

Weary and desperate people often turn to comforts that are fleeting; we, perhaps, feed our grief, drown our grief or entertain our grief with screens or self-pity.

And into this desperation, the church has the awesome responsibility of proclaiming comfort, but not just any comfort.

The church must avoid the types of platitudes that confuse reality with fate, that describe sorrow as something that God designed for our lives.

Pain is not a test of faithfulness or something that must be endured in God’s time, and we cannot even promise that everything will be OK – soon or ever again.

Rather, the church must speak comfort that is rooted in things that are true about God’s love for God’s people:

- **God created us.**
- **God knows even the numbers of hairs on our heads.**
- **Nothing can separate us from the love of God.**
- **God does not grow weary.**
- **God is merciful.**
- **God’s love is deep and abiding.**

We are never, ever, ever alone.

These promises are of such import that they must be amplified and prioritized. If the choice is between updates about the budget and words of comfort, choose comfort.

If the choice is between details about new procedures and words of comfort, choose comfort.

In communication with (*one another*) the church family, speak comfort. In messaging to the community, speak comfort. To staff and volunteers, speak comfort.

To those looking for complaints on which to focus all of their anxiety, speak comfort. To those whose grief rivals Job, speak comfort.

This is, perhaps, a critical moment to remember the church is made up of its people, that the church is more than an institution or its religious leaders.

If “being church” requires speaking comfort, we have the opportunity to engage in new ways of speaking comfort to each other and into the grief of the community.

We have the opportunity to equip (*ourselves and*) our people to be bearers of comfort and to be thoughtful about the words we speak and what they reveal about the God whom we worship.

SPEAKING OF COMFORT?

Instead of

God never gives us more than we can handle.

Trust God's timing.

God called her home; it must have been her time to go.

Everything is going to be ok because God loves you.

Try

God is always with us, even when things are hard.

God weeps with us.

Even death cannot separate us from the love of God.

God loves you, even when everything is not ok.

What new ways of speaking comfort might (*you or*) your church explore during this time ...? Amid other community crises? How might your people engage with each other in new and powerful ways amid new limitations, new hurts, and new fears?

We have the opportunity – indeed, we have been called for such a time as this – to speak with the certainty that we are never, ever, ever alone.

‘Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,’ saith your God.”

Friends, I love you more than I could ever fully express, and I give God thanks for each and every one of you.

In Christ,

David Turner

Pastors and Staff Contact Information

Dr. David Turner
Senior Pastor
davidturner@cbcrichmond.org
(804) 938-0572

Rev. Mary Richerson
Associate Pastor for Music & Adult Ministry
maryricherson@cbcrichmond.org
(804) 432-0421

Leslie Hepburn
Minister to Families
lesliehepburn@cbcrichmond.org
(804) 683-1189

Dr. Stephen Richerson
Minister of Congregational Care
stephenricherson@cbcrichmond.org
(804) 839-3070

Nicole Averette
Financial Administrator
nicoleaverette@cbcrichmond.org
(804) 794-8055

Sue Brannan
Administrative Assistant
suebrannan@cbcrichmond.org
(804) 794-8055

Church Office
(804) 794-8055
church@cbcrichmond.org