



REDEEMING SEXUALITY

I believe that one of the tasks of the church in every age and every culture is to discern what it means to follow Jesus in this particular time and in this particular place. We are not called to run away from the hardest issues that we face in the world, but rather to face them head-on and discern how to engage them in a way that is faithful to Jesus and his Word.

Issues surrounding sex and sexuality are an omni-present reality for North American Christians today, and represent one of those disorienting cultural challenges for many of us. These challenges can provoke fear, anxiety, confusion, or anger. The challenge is intensified because it is not just about what we believe, but also about how we relate to the people around us. This is not an abstract issue! It is a human issue – nearly all of us have work colleagues who believe very differently, a child who has come out as gay, or a neighbor who is transgendered. How do we not only think differently as Christians, but also then live out those beliefs in a way that models the way of Jesus?

Over the next 18 months and beyond, we want to provide opportunities for the Third community to address some of these difficult issues and consider how we can love our neighbors and follow Jesus faithfully. As in other cultural issues we face as a church, we will approach these issues of sexuality in a posture of “engaged difference” (1 Peter 2:9-12). That means that on the one hand, we reject an attacking posture that condemns the culture or seeks to aggressively conform it to our way of thinking. On the other hand, we reject a conforming posture that seeks to accommodate to the culture in order to stay relevant. Instead, we want to live as a radically counter-cultural community when it comes to sex and sexuality, yet at the same time remain deeply engaged in the lives of our neighbors, families and colleagues, bearing winsome witness to the good news of Jesus.

I learned about a powerful example of “engaged difference” after the recent shootings in Orlando. My friend Gabriel Salguero is the pastor at Iglesia El Calvario, a Latino megachurch just 10 minutes south of the Pulse nightclub. On the Sunday of the shootings, hundreds of people from the church prayed, gave blood, and passed out water at the site of the tragedy.

[Continued]

THIRD —

*training disciples to love
and transform the world
through
Jesus Christ.*

Rev. Corey Widmer
Lead Pastor

Rev. Ed Satterfield
Associate Pastor for Congregational
Care & Administration

Rev. Rick Hutton
Associate Pastor for Students
(grades 6 - 12)

Andrea Woie
Student Ministry Associate

Tom Barila
Director of Christian Education

Tracie Meadows
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Kathy White
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Dr. John White
Director of Music

Kim Taulbee
Associate Music Director

Beth Nichols
Director of Lay Ministries

Becca Payne
Director of Communications

Alex Sawyer
Technical Director

Tim Latham
Director of Young Adult Ministries

Rev. Richard Haney
Parish Associate

Rev. Nan Clarke
Parish Associate for
Care Ministries

**THIRD PRESS DEADLINE FOR
AUGUST: Friday, July 8**
Submit to: beccap@thirdrva.org

Later that evening, the church hosted the city-wide prayer vigil to remember the lives lost and pray for all those affected. Many members of the LGBTQ community were present. When asked about the church's response, Pastor Salguero replied, "If we've learned anything, it's that no matter what our disagreements are, God calls us to love our neighbor and to be Jesus and to mourn with those who mourn." That is engaged difference.

Here are some opportunities ahead that we want you to know about:

- **Redeeming Sexuality:** July 23, at 9:30 a.m. at Veritas School. A forum with Deb Hirsch, the author of a recent book by the same name. This event is co-hosted by Third, East End Fellowship and Veritas School. See more information below!
- **Real Sex:** A 5-week class offered in evenings this Fall (2016). We'll be offering this class, taught by me and others, that addresses issues like the cultural roots of our current ideas on sexuality, marriage and singleness, homosexuality and gender.
- **Service of Healing for Sexual Brokenness:** Look for this event to happen in early Winter 2017.
- **Weekend with Wesley Hill:** Save the date for March 31 - April 2, 2017. Wesley Hill is a professor of New Testament at Trinity School for Ministry, and writes and speaks extensively on Christianity and sexual ethics. Hill wrote the book *Spiritual Friendship* which was released last year.

One other resource I highly recommend is a recent 6-part podcast series called "The Gay Conversation" hosted by the Christian cultural forum called Q. It is an excellent survey of the issues and includes some very thought-provoking content and practical guidance. You can access it at qpodcast.org.

May the Lord continue to guide his church as we wrestle with this and other difficult issues in a way that loves our neighbor and glorifies Him.

Grace and peace of our Savior+
Corey Widmer

REDEEMING SEX WORKSHOP WITH DEB HIRSCH

Saturday, July 23 | 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
Veritas School | 3400 Brook Road

In this workshop, Debra Hirsch, author of *Redeeming Sex: Naked Conversations about Sexuality and Spirituality* will help us explore how when you consider the world from the perspective of God's kingdom mission, the smoke can begin to clear and a redemptive imagination takes root. Deb has an incredibly unique ability to help facilitate this conversation and to bring things to light that are fresh, rooted and hope-giving. Discover a holistic, biblical vision of sex and gender that honors God and offers good news to the world.

Registration is free, but required: thirdrva.org/events.

UPDATES AND NEWS

AN UPDATE ON THE NEW DATABASE & GIVING STATEMENTS

We have transitioned to a new church management software called ShelbyNext. We are still learning the ropes and are grateful for your patience! We are migrating our contribution statements to be distributed electronically. The statements will go automatically to the email address we have on file.

If you prefer to receive a hard copy instead, please contact Lynley at the church office: lynleys@thirdrva.org or 282-4645 ext. 116.

MEET THE SUMMER 2016 WORSHIP INTERNS

This year marks the first summer of a vibrant intern program on our worship team. Your support and encouragement of this group of interns will help us continue the program in the years to come! We hope you can introduce yourselves to them and get to know them over the next few weeks.

MOLLY EVANS: Molly, raised in Cambodia on the missions field, is a senior at Liberty University, pursuing a degree in Worship Arts.

GRACE LEE: Grace was raised in Northern Virginia, but is currently a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, pursuing a degree in Voice. She is part of the worship team at VCU's Intvarsity.

BROOKE WINTERS: Originally from Philadelphia, Brooke is part of the worship community at East End Fellowship, and works at the Faison School.

JAY NELSON: Jay, hailing from Alabama, is a Worship Study Major at Lee University in Tennessee.

HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

VCU's Global Education Office is hosting a large number of Chinese students this summer, including about 40 visiting students that will spend 4 weeks at VCU for an English and cultural exchange program. They are looking for some local American families to provide opportunities for these students to share cultures, food and stories.

DETAILS

- **WHEN:** Between July 11 - August 4
- **WHAT:** Bring two or more international students into your home for a family dinner to share cultures. All students live on the VCU campus and would need transportation to and from campus.
- **CONTACT:** If you would like to sign up or have any questions, please contact Elaine Metcalf (elaine@swistock.com) or Annie Gao (gaoy23@vcu.edu).

2016 MISSIONS & OUTREACH UPDATE

Jesus has given the Church a mission to witness to the good news of his Kingdom throughout the world. Each of us is tasked with this mission—taking part through our personal witness, our prayers, and our offerings.

This year Third Church is giving 28% of its offerings to Mission & Outreach. Third helps support over 70 mission and outreach partners extending from Richmond to the rest of the world. Partners are funded based on their alignment with Third's six particular strategic priorities— the six fields of ministry that we feel God has particularly called us to, and gifted us to address. These priorities (below) guide our decision making around missions budget and planning.

THIRD CHURCH'S 6 MISSION PRIORITIES

- **Leadership Development in Developing Nations:** Third desires to facilitate the training, education and strengthening of national Christian leaders in developing nations, believing that indigenous leadership is preferred over expatriate leadership.
- **Evangelism and Church Planting Among Unreached People Groups:** Third wants to be strategically engaged in bringing the Gospel and planting churches in areas where there is little or no Gospel presence.
- **Deep Relationship With Indigenous Churches:** We want to encourage the church where it already exists and share the resources the Lord has entrusted to us to serve them, help them thrive and enable their ministry reach to grow.
- **Ministry to Internationals in Richmond:** We want to respond to the opportunities in our own communities to reach the nations, whether they are immigrants or just temporary residents.
- **Christian Community Development in Richmond:** The Church is called to minister to the poor and Third has a long history of effective outreach and fruitful partnerships in Richmond in ways that offer practical help and long-term benefits with dignity and respect.
- **Church Planting and Evangelism in Richmond:** Third is deeply committed to planting churches in our city and sharing the Gospel in the communities where we live.

We also commit a percentage of our mission and outreach budget to organizations and programs outside of the priorities above. This category is labeled as **Discipleship Ministries** and includes support for ministries and partners doing evangelism and discipleship both internationally and locally, Christ-centered counseling ministries, and need-based ministries like the Pregnancy Resource Center and the Deacon's Fund.

2016 MISSION AND OUTREACH FUNDING

"Go and make disciples of all nations. . ."

Matthew 28:18





Jobs for Life is a 12-week, relationship-centered jobs training program.

Each student is teamed with a Champion who walks with them through the class and the months following, as they journey from unemployment or underemployment to better employment. Our teachers interact closely with students, providing practical job training within a framework of God's good design for work.

The next class will begin September 12, and will be held on Monday evenings through December 5.

Hear what people are saying about being involved with Jobs for Life:

““ My student travelled from Brandermill every week to attend this program, illustrating the diverse backgrounds of our speakers, champions, and students, which reflects God moving in the world through the greater church, not just Third Church. Jobs for Life is not just a jobs program. It is a weekly Bible study focused on God the Creator, his purpose for work, and our privilege of discovering his plan for our lives and developing our talents to his glory. This class is an impressive collection of individuals. Thankfully, we use the term “champion” instead of “mentor” or “teacher” because we champions are often greatly challenged and convicted by the lessons and always deeply impressed by the talents and wisdom of the “students.” I left every class energized and inspired, looking forward to worshipping God through my own work for the rest of the week.

And week by week we came together in fellowship, forming relationships through unique shared experiences in this class. That is what I will always remember from this semester of Jobs for Life and am blessed to have shared with the entire class.”

Derek Gage, Champion

““ I often say that all people need to do is put their eyes and ears on this program and they will never be the same. This program doesn't slowly creep into your mindset to rationally call you into service. No, it shoots straight for the heart and pierces the part of you that says, 'I am witnessing God at work and I want to be a part of this!'"

Ginger James

““ When I think of the Gospel message and its redemptive and healing message, I think of the work that happens at Jobs for Life. Many students find themselves surrounded by brokenness, fear, pain...

When that student is surrounded by a loving and caring community who sees in that broken life something beautiful that God has carefully crafted with great purpose, there is a resurgence of life and hope."

Luke Swygard, Teacher

READY TO SIGN UP? Our next class starts in September, and we're actively recruiting volunteers and support now. Get in touch with Ginger James to learn more or sign up: gingerjames1@icloud.com or 804-647-5348.



Celebrating Faye Rivers

25 Years of Service Leadership to Community Bible Study



HOW CBS STARTED

It was 1976-77, and there were a few young moms at home with little ones in a city that was new to them. Faye Rivers had recently started a Bible Study for women in her home on Baldwin Road. By September of 1977, twenty-five ladies packed into the Rivers' living room every Wednesday for Bible study while just as many children played in the basement. This group was quickly outgrowing their house! Having briefly attended the Community Bible Study (CBS) at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, MD, a group of women, namely Carol Lemons, Elaine Metcalf and Faye, recognized that CBS was a way to reach out to more women, plus it included an excellent childrens' program! The first CBS class began in Richmond in 1978, meeting at Third Presbyterian Church.



FAYE RIVERS: CBS TEACHING DIRECTOR

Community Bible Study, founded in 1975 at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, MD was a new ministry, with classes in a handful of states, when Faye and her friends prayerfully started a class here in Richmond. The CBS website states, "Community Bible Study's story is rooted in prayer and a strong desire to help people grow in their relationship with Jesus by exploring the Bible. These two aspects remain as vital to who we are today as they were at the very beginning." Faye was the Teaching Director of the Richmond CBS class for the first 2 years and then from 1993 to her recent retirement in May of 2016. She has faithfully served CBS for 38 years, including helping launch new classes across the city and serving for 25 years as teaching director!

Some numbers from a recent year highlight one of the most beautiful aspects of our class here in Richmond. Our enrollment included 344 women and homeschooled teens representing 91 different area churches and 25 unique denominations. The children's program, for which we consistently have a waiting list, served 170 children. Our class is comprised of women in their late teens and early 20's to women in their 90's. There are women who have never attended a Bible study or even opened a Bible studying alongside women who have been studying God's Word for decades.

Faye's leadership has created a safe place to explore the truths of the scriptures, focusing on our unity in Christ. Every aspect of this ministry is bathed in prayer. Faye set the tone of uncompromised truth communicated in love, encouraging the leadership team of "ordinary people called by an extraordinary God" to serve with excellence, loving women well.

TESTIMONIES OF HOW FAYE HAS BEEN USED BY GOD TO LEAD WITH LOVE AND GRACE



"Faye was committed to teaching 100% truth. She would never add or subtract from the Bible. Her gifts are many; she is a grace-filled leader, wise counselor, compassionate listener, faithful prayer warrior and tenderhearted friend. Deuteronomy 6:5 summarizes Faye: "...to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

"For many of us, Faye's faithfulness and love of God's Word profoundly influenced our spiritual journey. She set a godly example of what Scripture says about teachers in James 3:1. Year after year, she spent hours studying diligently and praying for God-directed words as she prepared the weekly lecture.

"Her patience and kindness are always evident, and her courage to speak the truth in love according to Scripture never wavers. Her honesty, vulnerability, and practical examples from daily life were always inspiring and we knew that she was teaching us what God had first taught her. She did not just 'give' the lecture—she *lived* the lecture!

"I don't think any of us will really know, on this side of heaven, the full extent of the legacy she leaves. What we do know is that countless lives were changed for eternity because she answered God's call to a ministry role she didn't expect or seek. I am forever grateful to God for his gift of teaching to Faye and for Faye's obedient service in CBS, which God used to change my life through studying his Word."



"When I think of Faye and what describes her, my first thought is faithful, then second, obedient. Back in 1978 when she was asked to be the Community Bible Study teacher, she put aside her fear of inadequacy and filled the role to which God was calling her, doing it with dedication and excellence. All these years she has modeled for us trust in God, humility, and dedication to family. If the Apostle Paul were here, he might use Faye as an example of the Christian life described in Colossians 1:10 and 11. God's servant Faye is wise with a spirit attuned to his will, always seeking to acquire a thorough understanding of the ways in which God works, living well for the Master, making him proud as she works hard. God has given Faye the strength to stick it out over the long haul, the strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, with gratitude for the strength to take part in everything bright and beautiful God has for us."

"The substance of Faye's teaching was never just an interesting vignette or a captivating speaking technique— though she had both. She relied solely on the truth of the scriptures to create the 'wow' factor. She knew there was no bigger 'wow' than God's Word and she was a powerful vehicle for His Truth to flow through.

"Over many years, my knowledge, understanding and love for God's Word flourished under Faye's teaching and she nurtured one of the most treasured gifts in my life to this day—an insatiable thirst for living water.

"I also witnessed many women come to know Jesus as their personal Savior sitting under Faye's teaching. In a class of over 300 women, Faye made every member feel that she was there for them and this gospel that she was talking about was for them. She is truly a gifted teacher; I would even say *anointed*. But most of all Faye loves Jesus, and she just wanted to give him her very best through teaching. Well done Faye, well done."



"Almost seven years ago, during one of the darkest times of my life, I walked into CBS for the first time. As I dried my tears that morning, I walked into a room of about 300 women of all ages, backgrounds, shapes, sizes and denominations (but we would never know that for sure, since we never spoke about denominations).

"I was amazed by the unity of the body of Christ in that room. No one was huddled together in an exclusive group, no one was arguing non-essential doctrines. Everyone was just...together..with one purpose...to study the Bible. Though the time for personal sharing was limited, I felt the love and prayers of my core group members all through that year. Faye's teaching was always what I needed to hear. I was loved and cared for by a group of women who barely knew me and a Teaching Director, Faye, who loved with the love of Jesus. Her leadership, her care and prayers have supported me. Her teaching always led back to the One who holds it all. Faye calmly equips the women who volunteer to serve in CBS with his Word and her wisdom and her grace and her humility. She preaches the word and lives it, standing strong and leaning on the Lord through her own struggles, always pointing to Jesus. And now, after many years of leading, Faye is stepping down. I feel like a baby bird being gently nudged out of the nest but I know I'm ready, I know I'm prepared, in large part because of Faye's love, care and teaching. I'm ready to fly because though Faye was his vehicle, it was the Lord who has been leading all along."



SERVANT LEADERSHIP AT COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

Servant leadership is a model grounded in Scripture and Biblical principles, and it permeates Community Bible Study. In fact, the team who leads the large group of leaders is called the Servants Team.

But the role of a servant implies there is a Master. Excellent servant leadership is not measured by the attention drawn to the servant, but to the Master. It is highlighted in transitions, when others step in to carry out the Master's plans and purposes.

Faye has passed the baton to new Teaching Director Milby West, a woman called by God, in God's perfect timing. Faye's unselfish and humble devotion to the mission of CBS undergirds the next generation of servant leaders who will step seamlessly into place.

All eyes are on the plans and purposes of the Master, and the mission of Community Bible Study continues: to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in our communities through caring, in-depth Bible study, available to all.

Thank you, Faye, for faithfully serving. To God be the glory!

Interested in attending Community Bible Study in the future?

There are many different CBS classes that meet around Richmond. The class at Third meets on Wednesday mornings and will be starting up again in the Fall. Find more information on our West End class here: richmondwest.cbsclass.org.

For more information on CBS, or to find a CBS chapter close to you, visit: communitybiblestudy.org.

JULY CALENDAR

**July
11-15**

8:30 a.m. -
1:00 p.m.

SPORTS SKILLS CAMP

This awesome week includes learning soccer and basketball skills combined with character-building devotions and sharing of the Gospel!

Sign-ups close soon: thirdrva.org/events.

Contact Tom Barila with questions.



**July
13**

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

WOMEN'S SUMMER STUDY KICKOFF

Join the women of Third for the annual summer book study. This year, we'll be reading Nicole Unice's latest, *Brave Enough*. Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. through August 24 in the Fellowship Hall.

Sign-ups close July 3: thirdrva.org/events.

Contact Beth Nichols with questions.



**July
16**

9:00 a.m.
Veritas School

RACE AND THE CHURCH: Understanding the Heart-Cry of #blacklivesmatter

We all wrestle for power and a desire to be heard. In the church's present state, is there a sense in which blacks particularly need to be heard? If so, does that suggest that all others are ignored? The immediate response, from many, to #blacklivesmatter is that all matter equally. How does each hashtag speak for the need for people to be heard and perhaps especially blacks? What can listening to the voices of many African-Americans do for our churches? What about poor whites and all others?

More info: raceandthechurch.com

**RACE
and the
CHURCH**

**July
23**

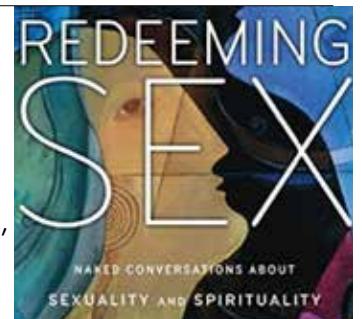
9:30 a.m. -
12:30 p.m.
Veritas School

REDEEMING SEX WORKSHOP (with Deb Hirsch)

Discover a holistic, biblical vision of sex and gender that honors God and offers good news to the world. In this workshop, Debra Hirsch, author of *Redeeming Sex: Naked Conversations about Sexuality and Spirituality*, will help us explore how when you consider the world from the perspective of God's kingdom mission, it turns out the smoke clears and a redemptive imagination takes root. Deb has an incredibly unique ability to help facilitate this conversation and to bring things to light that are fresh, rooted and hope-giving.

Sign up now: thirdrva.org/events.

Registration is free, but seating is limited.



AUGUST CALENDAR

In August, we observe a sabbath from many of our programs and classes. We hope you enjoy this time as an opportunity to be intentionally quiet and still before we kick off fall events and ministry opportunities.

August

20

**5:00 p.m.
Pump Road Fields**

CAC BACKPACK DRIVE & CELEBRATION PICNIC

We're coordinating a collection of backpacks with the Christian Arabic Church for the immigrant and refugee families they serve. This is an annual event that takes place during August before school is back in session, and this year will culminate with a celebratory picnic with our CAC friends.



Backpack collection: Bring backpacks (filled with school supplies) to the Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, August 7 or August 14.**

Picnic: Join us on August 20, at 5:00 p.m. at the Pump Road fields. The main dish will be provided, CAC will provide desserts, and we ask all Third folks to bring sides to share.

Register for the picnic by August 17: thirdrva.org/events

August

21-22

Fellowship Hall

JOHN ROSEMOND PARENTING WORKSHOPS

We're excited to be partnering with Hunter Country Day School to bring renowned speaker and parenting coach John Rosemond to Third for two special workshops. John will offer time-proven parenting principles along with practical help.

The Ten Biggest Mistakes Parents Make (and How to Stop Making Them):

- Sunday, August 21, 2:00 - 5:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- Cost: \$25 per person, \$40 per couple

Understanding and Leading Your Teen:

- Monday, August 22, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- Cost: \$20 per person, \$30 per couple

Register here: thirdrva.org/events

August
31

**7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Fellowship Hall**

EVENING OF PRAYER & PRAISE

Join us for this special, informal time to pray and worship together. All are invited to the Fellowship Hall for this evening of prayer and praise.



Third Church
500 Forest Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23229
804.282.4645



This September, we'll be partnering with local churches and ministries to implement a city-wide community outreach program that invites the community to come and explore God in local churches over a 7-week period. Much like the Alpha courses, the Explore God framework invites seekers and non-believers to come and explore their honest questions about God. Our sermon series will anchor the discussions, but we'll also have special discussion groups for youth, small groups, and adult Sunday morning discipleship classes.

The Explore God series is the perfect opportunity to invite friends and family members who don't yet have a relationship with Christ and have interest in learning more, asking the hard questions, and meeting other believers.

In preparation for this series:

- Pray for the specific people in your life that you could invite to church or to one of these gatherings.
 - Visit the Explore God website to get a feel for what this series will look like: exploreGod.com.
 - If you're interested in facilitating any of these groups or discussions, or have a heart for reaching non-believers, get in touch with Tom Barila (tomb@thirdva.org).
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