

PARISH GROUP STORIES: RICH AND BRADLEY CRAWFORD

Written by Paige Fischer

Sometimes, the third time really is the charm. When Beth Nichols asked Rich and Bradley Crawford to lead a Parish Group last fall, Bradley had answered “absolutely not” two times before she felt God gently working on her heart. “I honestly didn’t think I had the space in my life for anything else,” says Bradley. “Here we were, two broken sinners, a mother of three active kids, a father who literally travels around the world every month. We were bouncing between caring for aging parents and our own kids, walking daily with friends who are deeply hurting, doing and folding laundry, fixing broken things in our home, trying to find some semblance of date nights and family time in the midst of it all. Where were we to fit this new role?”

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But the couple felt an indescribable calling to open their hearts and truly trust God to empower them to find the energy—and the space—to lead a group near their home in Windsor Farms. “We actually had to say out loud, ‘God, we can’t do this; we are already beyond stretched and stressed. Could you be asking us to lead? If so, you must meet us and be the real leader of this group, not us.’” And that’s exactly what has happened since the Grove Parish began meeting in January at the home of Peyton and Becky Jenkins. With some 27 adults and at least twice that many children, this Parish Group has slowly developed deep relationships, a strong sense of community and—despite the scheduling challenges every family faces—a rhythm for meeting every Sunday evening.



WE PRESS ON, COMING TOGETHER TO GROW, BE CHALLENGED, AND WALK DEEPER WITH JESUS.

Bradley says both she and Rich have become incredibly intentional about their time, prioritizing their Parish Group, and carving out space to pray and prepare. Sunday morning leader meetings have fed the couple spiritually and emotionally, and they always come away with valuable insights from other Parish leaders, each of whom approaches the endeavor of leading in a slightly different way. “We all show up as sinners, clinging to the cross, and these parish groups happen around Richmond every week,” says Bradley. “We press on, coming together to grow, be challenged, and walk deeper with Jesus. Can you think of anything better?” ➔

IT'S THE SMALL, SIMPLE ACTS OF NEIGHBORING THAT ARE WHAT DISCIPLESHIP IS ALL ABOUT.

However reluctant she was to lead a group at first, Bradley was completely on board with the mission of the Parish model. "Because Richmond has so many neighborhoods, and each neighborhood has its own subculture, I loved the idea of really digging into that outside of church," says Bradley. "It's the small, simple acts of neighboring that are what discipleship is all about. On the weeks when it's harder, or I'm more tired, I ask for help.

And that's been a lesson for me—to not put so much pressure on myself to be perfect, to allow God to work through my own brokenness and use that vulnerability to make other people in our group understand that they can show up in their imperfect moments, too. I always remind myself that God didn't tell us to try to be disciples when we had the energy or when our schedules were light and we could work it in. He told us to go and *be* disciples, period. And that's what we're humbly trying to do."

Ready to check out a parish group or interested in leading one? Visit thirdrva.org/parish-life or contact Derek Mondeau at derekm@thirdrva.org.

EGYPT TRIP RECAP

Our team, comprised of members from the Christian Arabic Church and Third, went to help identify a sister church for the CAC and Third to adopt together. In the future, we hope to visit and support this church as well as host them here in Richmond, alongside our CAC brothers and sisters.

There is a remnant of believers in Egypt, a small but mighty number, of faithful saints standing for Christ in a Muslim context. Our visit came during Ramadan, when it is mandatory for Muslims to fast until sundown. The streets fill with people throughout the evening until the early hours of the morning, eating, shopping, meeting in coffee shops while enjoying the cool evenings after the long hot days of summer.





Our visit was for 10 days (plus travel days). In these 10 days we visited multiple churches (from Cairo to Alexandria), The Synod of the Nile, met with new church planters at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, attended the seminary graduation and met with professors from the seminary. It was a rich time of better grasping an understanding of the challenges that the Egyptian church faces and how we can come alongside them in partnership.



TUTORING UPDATE

Wednesday Evening Homework Tutoring with the Christian Arabic Church has wrapped up for the year, but we wanted to share a fun picture!

One of the wonderful side benefits from this program are the sweet relationships that have formed. Recently, Third members Betsy Pollard and Amy Ziegler had their students and families over to their home for dinner. Both Betsy and Amy have tutored Abinoub and Michael for several years and have gotten to know both of the boys and their parents really well — joining in on birthday celebrations too!

Tutoring will be starting again mid-September, but we'll start building teams again in August. We have over 80 children participating, with a number of new families coming over from Egypt this summer. If you've ever thought about helping out on Wednesday evenings, subbing from time to time when you schedule allows, or have questions about the program, I would love to hear from you now!



Let's talk! Andi Redmond: andir@thirdrva.org.

INTRODUCING

COMPASS

Center for Christian Formation & Leadership

Being a leader in your work, in your church, or in your family is a high calling. But it can also be difficult. It comes with a whole set of demands and pressures that can often feel overwhelming. Christian leaders can easily spend so much time caring for others that they lose track of caring for their own souls. These realities are some of the reasons that Brad and Marmi Houff are starting a new ministry called the Compass Center for Christian Formation & Leadership. They want to help Christians stay rooted in Christ so that their leadership and work will flow from an ever-deepening relationship with Christ. The Compass Center will offer one-on-one spiritual direction and monthly Soul Care Retreats for Christian leaders.

Brad and Marmi, the Co-Founders and Directors of Compass, have spent over twenty-five years working for Christian ministries where they have encouraged and strengthened leaders in their journey with Christ. They worked together for many years in campus ministry with InterVarsity. Marmi has been a participant and volunteer with the Transforming Center and was trained as a Spiritual Director at Richmond Graduate School. For nine years Brad served as the Pastor of Community & Spiritual Formation at Hope Church. He is currently working toward a Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation for Ministry Leaders at Gordon-Conwell.

YOU'RE INVITED: LAUNCH PARTY

August 4 or 16 | 7 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

RSVP: CompassCenterVA@gmail.com

Since the Houffs are members of Third, they are inviting anyone from our church to learn more about the ministry. You are invited to be join other Christian leaders and interested guests at one of the ministry launch parties on August 4 or 16 at 7 p.m. in Third's Fellowship Hall. Enjoy some dessert and drinks while you learn about the mission and vision of Compass.

To RSVP to our launch party or learn more about Compass, email CompassCenterVA@gmail.com.



ETERNITY CHURCH

COME AND VISIT!

Sundays at 10 a.m.

1200 Wilmington Ave, Richmond, VA 23227

Those at Third in the late 1990s and early 2000s will remember Associate Pastor David Singh — fondly, likely, given his affable personality and dynamic preaching. Called by Third in 1998 to move from Australia to serve as Missions and Family Ministries Pastor, he was commissioned in 2003 to launch Eternity Church on Richmond's Northside.

Eternity set out to reach internationals in the metro area. While this focus continues, the congregation is comprised of a sizeable number of “locals” who have a passion for reaching any outside the faith with the gospel of Christ.

In September 2017, the congregation closed on what had always been Ginter Park Baptist Church, moving by year's end from a commercial building in an urban setting to a traditional church in a residential area. In January, Eternity focused on renovating the sanctuary, accomplishing enough to re-open it to members and the public on Easter Sunday.

The sanctuary has a storied past. Built downtown by Presbyterians in the 1850s, it lost only a 100-foot-tall spire to the fire which accompanied the evacuation of Richmond in 1865. Planned demolition in the early 1920s was avoided when the sanctuary was purchased and moved — Tiffany windows intact — to Ginter Park.

With its brilliant blue chancel, Eternity's renovated sanctuary gives a nod to St. Andrew's Kirk in Chennai, India, a Georgian church built in 1822 that is distinguished by a fifty-foot wide dome in a similar hue.

The people of Third provided valuable support to Eternity in its early years. Now, David and his congregation invite you to pick a Sunday and bless them with a visit at their 10 a.m. service at 1200 Wilmington Avenue, off Brook Road near Laburnum Avenue. David's preaching is engaging, the setting is striking, and the welcome is warm.

Learn more at eternitychurch.com.

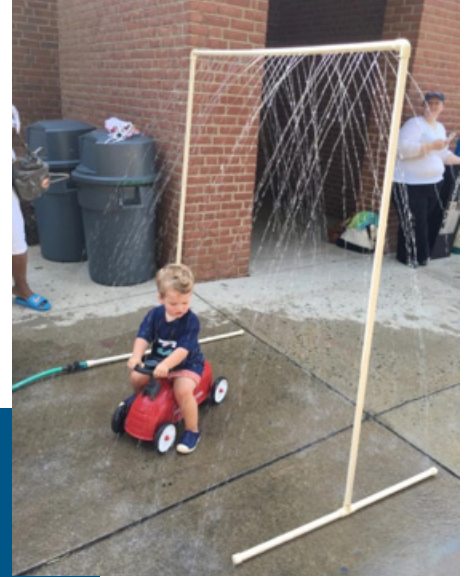
CALL FOR FAMILY MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

Influencing the next generation for Jesus... what an opportunity! That's exactly what we believe we do when we teach a Sunday School class, help in a classroom, and hold babies in the nursery. We're making a tangible difference in the lives of these children, building his Kingdom here on earth, amongst these little ones.

Opportunities to serve include rotating on a teaching team twice a month, or volunteering to pitch in once or twice a month. We're already recruiting volunteer team members for the fall and can't do it without you!

This is important work and we want you to be a part.

If you are feeling the nudge to help, please contact Tracie Meadows (traciem@thirdrv.org) or Kathy White (kathyw@thirdrv.org) today. With God's help, you can make a difference!



SUMMER PLAYGROUP

Come enjoy a play date where you can get to know other parents while your children do different activities together! All dates will be on Fridays at 10:00 a.m. at Third's playground. If it rains, we'll move to room 103.

JULY 13 MEET ME AT THE CAR WASH

Bring a riding toy and clothes that can get wet.

JULY 27 STORY TIME

A story followed by time on the playground.

AUG 10 STORY TIME

A story followed by time on the playground.

AUG 24 GAME DAY

Come play some creative Pinterest games with your child. The kind you would like to do but don't have the time to pull together!





Be a part of our new hymnal collection for the Sanctuary!

We are so excited to be joining together as a congregation to invest in new hymnals. This hymnal—titled *Lift Up Your Hearts*—includes all our favorite hymns plus beautiful liturgies and many of our new favorite worship songs. Over 950 songs total!

It also gives us a fresh opportunity to lean more on our hymnal, using it as often as possible both in our worshipping life in the Sanctuary and also in our homes. Purchase a new hymnal (\$20) for the Sanctuary in honor of a loved one, and also purchase one for use with friends and family at home or for your parish group.

Copies of the hymnal will continue to be available for you to look through on Sunday mornings at the front of the Sanctuary.

For more info and to donate, visit thirdrva.org/hymnals or call 804-282-4645.

JOIN OUR SUMMER CHOIR

The summer is a great time to exercise those rusty vocal chops! The choir will be singing in one of the morning services each week this summer, rotating each week so all of the services are included. We rehearse just 30 minutes before the service in the choir room. We are singing some of our favorites as well as some spirituals and gospel songs.

THE SCHEDULE:

June 24	11:15 a.m.	August 5	8:45 a.m.
July 1	8:45 a.m.	August 12	10:00 a.m.
July 8	10:00 a.m.	August 19	11:15 a.m.
July 22	11:15 a.m.	August 26	11:15 a.m.

Additional bonus rehearsals are scheduled for July 12 and Aug. 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Please feel free to pop into the choir room 30 minutes before those services to practice with us. Contact John White if you have any questions: johnw@thirdrva.org.

Third Family,

The family of Barry E. Saunders would like to express our sincere gratitude to members of Third Church for your cards, letters, and many kindnesses to him and all of us.

You helped shoulder the burden of our sorrow. We are especially grateful to Dr. John White and Rev. Nan Clarke for their spiritual guidance in planning his funeral.

Although we were unable to attend Third Church recently, we felt your prayers and are forever grateful.

- BJ Saunders & family



Third Church
500 Forest Ave.
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 282-4645



Called together for the renewal of all things through Jesus Christ.

OUR STAFF

REV. COREY WIDMER
Lead Pastor

REV. ED SATTERFIELD
Executive Pastor

DEREK MONDEAU
Pastor of Discipleship & Parish Ministry

REV. LAURIE JAWORSKI
Mission Pastor

REV. RICK HUTTON
Associate Pastor for Students (grades 6–12)

ANDREA WOIE
Student Ministry Associate

ALAN WARE
Director of Finance & Administration

TRACIE MEADOWS
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

KATHY WHITE
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

DR. JOHN WHITE
Pastor for Worship and Pastoral Care

KIM TAULBEE
Associate Music Director

BETH NICHOLS
Director of Connection Ministries

BECCA PAYNE
Director of Communications

ALEX SAWYER
Technical Director

TIM LATHAM
Director of Young Adult Ministries

REV. RICHARD HANEY
Theologian and Missiologist in Residence

REV. NAN CLARKE
Pastor for Care Ministries

THIRD PRESS DEADLINE FOR JULY: FRIDAY, JUNE 8. SUBMIT TO: BECCAP@THIRDVA.ORG