



RIVER ROAD CHURCH

BAPTIST

+ thoughtful faith +

explorer

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THE IMPROV LIFE

The technical name is “Improvisational Theatre,” but no one calls it that. “Improv” is the more familiar term for unplanned, unscripted theatre, created spontaneously onstage by the actors. Perhaps you’ve seen the British or American version of the television series *Whose Line is It Anyway?* where comedic sketches are created before a live studio audience. Improv is not for the faint of heart; it requires a special dose of daring and creativity that many of us assume we do not possess.

Scripture, however, is replete with accounts of improv. Genesis 12 begins with the call of God to Abraham, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” Abraham picked up his family and all that he possessed and moved to a land he had never seen. In other words, God instructs, “Abraham, improvise!”

Exodus 3 opens with Moses receiving the call of God to deliver the Israelite people from captivity in Egypt. Moses is so unnerved by this call that he offers up a series of excuses and reasons why he should not be charged with such an undertaking. Through it all, God challenges, “Moses, improvise!”

The Gospel of Luke tells us of the angel Gabriel visiting unsuspecting Mary with the news that she will give birth to the Son of God. She questions how this can be possible, but the response of the messenger of God to her is, “Mary, improvise!”

The same occurs when Jesus calls Simon Peter and Andrew to follow him as disciples. Jesus tells them they will turn from being fishermen to the unknown adventure of mission and ministry alongside him: “Gentlemen, improvise!”

These are but a few examples from the Bible of the call of God to the improv life. It is a call to leave the familiar, the scripted, the planned – for the unrehearsed spontaneity of following God into an unknown future.

What does this have to do with us? Everything. The claim and call of God is an exciting and disturbing one: it is a challenge to launch from the familiar into the unfamiliar territory of obeying God as an act of faith. It is discovering what God has in mind for our lives, rather than calling our own shots at every turn of life.

When I entered college many years ago, I did so with the intention of preparing for law school and a possible career in the political realm. Surprise! God had other ideas. God’s call to me was (you saw this coming, didn’t you?), “Bert, improvise!”

For those who may see the Bible as a book full of prescriptive advice on how to face each and every circumstance of life, I offer an alternative view. The Bible is, instead, a book of the stories of those who heard God’s invitation to improvisation. It is descriptive of the transformative power of God when faith leads us, rather than our own script. The Bible describes the adventure of standing on life’s stage without a script, while God spontaneously creates the way forward.

Are you ready for the improv life? Most of us aren’t. Most of the stories we read in scripture are about people who weren’t ready, either. But God is patient – and sometimes insistent – that we give it a try. Why would we want to live any other way?

BY BERT BROWNING

Choir Registration

Children, youth, and adults are invited to join our choirs for the upcoming 2018-2019 season!
Sign up online at www.rrcb.org/choirreg.

Children’s Choirs

Wednesdays, 5:45-6:30 p.m.

- Cherub Choir (Pre-K & Kindergarten)
[Pre-K: Must Turn 4 by September 30, 2018]
- Carol Choir (Grades 1 & 2)
- Crusader Choir (Grades 3-5)

Youth Choir

Sundays, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

- Youth Choir (Grades 6-12)

Chancel Choir (Adults)

Thursdays, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

If you would like to become a new member of our Chancel Choir, please fill out the new member form.

Evening Bridge

Tuesday, September 4

7:30 p.m., LC #102

Anyone who likes to play bridge (singles or couples) is invited to join us for a fun evening of bridge. Contact Kitty or George Davis (804-285-9782) for more information.

FIXERS

Thursdays, September 6 & 27

8:00 a.m., Reception Room

The FIXERS (Frequently Ingenious, eXtremely Energetic, Righteous Servants) are dedicated to keeping our beautiful church facility in top working order. The FIXERS meet for breakfast and fellowship, then break into teams and work on projects around the church. Please contact George Davis (804-285-9782) if you can make it.

Here's a test:

- Do you know what a weed looks like in a mulch bed?
- Do you know which end of a screwdriver to hold?
- Does holding a broom not intimidate you?
- Do you like free breakfast?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, you are qualified to join the FIXERS! Even if you didn't answer "yes" to any of the questions, you're still qualified to join the group. (As you can tell, our standards are not very high.) Men and women of all ages are encouraged to come.

Joyful Hearts: Women's Bible Study & Fellowship

Mondays, September 10 - November 19

9:30-11:00 a.m., LC #102

Joyful Hearts is studying Max Lucado's *In the Grip of Grace*, which focuses on the subject of grace throughout the Book of Romans. The cost is \$20 per person, payable at the first study, to cover the cost of books and materials. To sign-up, please contact Kitty Davis (804-285-9782).

The Comma Club Luncheon & Program

Tuesday, September 11

12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

The speaker will be Randy Fitzgerald, long time public relations director at the University of Richmond and columnist for *The Richmond News Leader*, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and *Boomer* magazine. He and his wife, Barb, have compiled many of these columns and experiences into a book, *Flights of Fancy: Stories, Conversations, and Life Travels with a Bemused Columnist and His Whimsical Wife*.

Please make your reservations by Friday, September 7 by calling the Church Office, or filling out the form online rrcb.org/seniors. Lunch is \$10 per person. The group is primarily made up of senior adults, though it is not a requirement; anyone interested in a program is invited.

Men's Fellowship Breakfast

Tuesday, September 11

7:00 a.m., Reception Room

The men of River Road Church are invited for breakfast, fellowship, and partnership in prayer. Please reserve your spot by calling the Church Office (804-288-1131).

FLO - For Ladies Only Luncheon

Friday, September 14

12:00 p.m., Hondo's Prime in the Shoppes at Innsbrook

RSVP to Jean Ellis (jean782carter@verizon.net or 804-272-7672) and let her know if you would like to carpool.

Young Adults Group: Amicitia Lunch

Sunday, September 16

12:30 p.m., Offsite

RSVP to Katie Merritt at katiecmerritt@gmail.com or 804-475-2553.

WMU Connectors

Tuesday, September 18

6:30 p.m., Lower Commons

All River Road women are cordially invited to join the group for an evening of fellowship and dinner! Rev. Dr. Bert Browning will be the speaker. For more information please call Wyatt Heisler at 804-741-9320 or Peggy Pruden at 804-282-4942.

Book Lovers Group

Thursday, September 27

7:30 p.m., LC #102

Book: *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate

Peggy Stevens will lead the discussion. Everyone is invited to attend! For more information, please contact Kitty Davis (804-285-9782).

Young Adults Group: Amicitia Happy Hour

Friday, September 28

5:30 p.m., Hutch

RSVP to Katie Merritt at katiecmerritt@gmail.com or 804-475-2553.

E. Carl Freeman Concert Series

The Chenault Duo

Internationally Acclaimed Duo Organists

Elizabeth & Raymond Chenault

Sunday, September 30, 2018

2:30 p.m., Sanctuary

The duo will perform a recital of organ music written for four hands and four feet. Specializing in works written for two performers, Elizabeth and Raymond Chenault have concertized extensively throughout the United States and in Europe.

Celebration Sunday - September 9

As we begin to look ahead at where God is leading this gathered community of faith called River Road, we will celebrate the past summer as well as the beginning of a new season, expressing our gratitude for all that makes us the people of God in this time and place. Sign up for the potluck by Tuesday, September 4.

Sunday Morning

- 9:40-10:00: Open House for Youth Sunday School
- 9:45-10:45: Sunday School
- 11:00-12:00: Worship with Gratitude Celebration

Parents, bring your youth to Sunday School early so you can meet their teachers. Adults, invite those you haven't seen during the summer months to join you in your Sunday School class that day.

Be present in worship as we pray for and celebrate all those who learn and teach in our community, as well as those who support our educational, missional, and worship ministries at our church.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CELEBRATION SUNDAY
AND TO SIGN UP FOR THE PICNIC:
www.rrcb.org/picnic

Sunday Evening

- 5:00-5:15: Gather for potluck/cookout
- 5:15-6:15: Food is served
- 6:30-7:15: Summer Presentations
- 7:15-8:00: Continued fellowship, games, etc.

Return to the church in the early evening for a church-wide picnic. The picnic will include the deacons providing fried chicken and the rest of us providing sides and desserts. Then we will hear from our church family about their summer experiences and adventures.

During the Celebration Sunday picnic, we'll hear from our youth about their experiences at PASSPORT and Unidiversity Camps and Mission RVA, our children about their time at PASSPORTkids! Camp, and our Nickelsville mission team about serving in Southwest Virginia. We want to hear from the rest of our church family and how they spent their summer, too! Email one picture from your summer adventure with a caption to summer@rrcb.org to be included in the Celebration Sunday slideshow.

Potluck side dishes:

- A-J: bring a salad
- K-S: bring a starchy side
- T-Z: bring a dessert

Missions

Alma Hunt Offering — September 2018

Together Virginia Baptists reach out from our churches to share Christ with others in our state and around the world with support from the Alma Hunt Offering. RRCB has participated in some of those missions in Southwest Virginia, Standing Rock, and Panama, as well as Grace Inside Virginia Prison Chaplain Service. This offering is a joint effort of the BGAV and WMUV. Specially marked offering envelopes are in pew racks.

Lloyd Jackson Memorial Bland County Mission Trip September 16-22

Please pray for the mission team traveling to Bland County, VA. On the trip, the team works on various construction and community projects through a local Baptist center. For more information, please contact Steve Lowery (804-330-0134 or twodukes@hotmail.com).

First Sunday Food Share — Sunday, September 2

River Road Church has a long history of working in many capacities with our three Baptist Centers: Church Hill, Oregon Hill, and South Richmond. We have donated food and other needed items, and we have gone to the centers and provided services and care. On the first Sunday of each month, you are invited to bring a bag of food for the Centers and place it in one of the green grocery carts in the Upper or Lower Commons. To best serve our centers and their communities, the center directors are requesting smaller-sized products. A suggested shopping list of food can be found on the Mission Tables.

Suggested Shopping List:

- Cans of Vegetables
- Cans of Fruit
- Cans of Soup
- Cans of Meat: small cans of tuna, chicken
- Cans of Pork and Beans or other Beans
- Canned Entrées (example: Spagettios)
- Boxed Macaroni and Cheese
- Packages of Powdered Milk
- Boxes of Cereal
- Rice
- Dry Pasta
- Peanut butter
- Jelly

Thoughtful Faith Community

Wednesday, September 12

- **4:45-5:30 p.m.:** River Road Camerata, Choir Room
- **5:30-6:15 p.m.:** Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- **5:45-6:30 p.m.:** Children's Choirs, Adult Choir Room & Youth Choir Room
- **6:15-7:00 p.m.:** TFC-Adults & TFC-Youth, Assembly Room

Intergenerational Discussion with Daniel Glaze & Marnie Fisher-Ingram

More and more studies are showing that all of a congregation benefits from intergenerational ministry. Let's explore why and ways we can do this together as a church family.

- **6:30-7:00 p.m.:** TFC-Kids, CH #141 & CH #145
Missions Education

Wednesday, September 19

- **4:45-5:30 p.m.:** River Road Camerata, Choir Room
- **5:30-6:15 p.m.:** Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- **5:45-6:30 p.m.:** Children's Choirs, Adult Choir Room & Youth Choir Room
- **6:15-7:00 p.m.:** TFC-Intergenerational, Fellowship Hall

Intergenerational Activity led by Marnie Fisher-Ingram

Around the tables together we will laugh and learn from one another.

For more information and to make your dinner reservations, please visit www.rrcb.org/tfc.

Wednesday, September 26

- **4:45-5:30 p.m.:** River Road Camerata, Choir Room
- **5:30-6:15 p.m.:** Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- **5:45-6:30 p.m.:** Children's Choirs, Adult Choir Room & Youth Choir Room
- **6:00-7:00 p.m.:** TFC-Youth, Youth Area
Games & Dessert
- **6:15-7:00 p.m.:** TFC-Adults, Assembly Room
Back to School with Dr. Jamelle Wilson, Dean, School of Professional and Continuing Studies, University of Richmond
- **6:30-7:00 p.m.:** TFC-Kids, CH #141 & CH #145
Missions Education

Wednesday Night Dinner Standing Reservations

Standing Reservations for Wednesday dinners, September 12 through December 19, 2018 (no dinner on October 31, November 19, or November 21), are now available. The pre-paid reservation provides a 10% discount from the normal price, so you can miss a Wednesday or two and maintain the convenience of having a standing reservation. The deadline to sign-up and pre-pay is anytime **before the first dinner on September 12**. To make your standing reservation, please call the Church Office (804-288-1131) and mail your payment, or make your reservation and pay online through Access ACS (www.rrcb.org/standingreservations).

13 Weeks Pre-paid Costs:

Adults & Youth - \$82/person
Children - \$32/person
Family Max - \$234/family

Weekly Costs:

Adults & Youth - \$7/person
Children - \$3/person
Family Max - \$20/family

Youth

Youth Fall Kickoff & Welcome of 6th Graders: Parent & Youth Volleyball Game & Potluck

Saturday, September 15

4:00-6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

CROP Hunger Walk

Sunday, September 16

1:00 p.m., Ginter Park United Methodist Church

Fifth Quarter

Friday, September 28

10:00 p.m. to Midnight, Youth Area

Sunday Night Youth Group

Sunday, September 23

- 4:00-5:00 p.m.: River Road Camerata
- 5:00-6:00 p.m.: Youth Choir
- 6:00-6:20 p.m.: Snack Supper
- 6:20-7:30 p.m.: Youth Group

Inquirer's Class

Sept. 16 & 23, Oct. 14 & 21, Nov. 4 & 11, 9:00-9:40 a.m.

Inquirer's Classes will be held six times this fall and are open to older elementary and youth students. The purpose of the class is to give your student a good foundation in their faith so that they may feel ready to explore the option of baptism. Marnie and Kim will be facilitating these classes. Sign up by September 9 to let us know your student is attending.