



CHRISTIANS OR DISCIPLES?

Dear Third Family,

In his lovely little book *The Radical Disciple*, John Stott points out that only three times in the entire New Testament are followers of Jesus called "Christians." The much more prevalent designation for those who follow Jesus in the New Testament is "disciple." I sometimes wish that the word "disciple" had won out over "Christian" in the centuries of the church's development. Although both terms indicate a relationship with Jesus, "disciple" has a more robust indication that those who are in relationship with Jesus not only believe in him but are "under the discipline" of his teaching and directives.

The gospel is not just the minimal entrance requirements for getting into heaven when you die. It is also a radical call to a new way of life in a new Kingdom. Jesus came not only to atone for our sins through his saving death, but also to announce a new Kingdom over which he is King (Mark 1:15, Luke 8:1). He now calls those who believe in him to follow him and re-order their lives around him and his reign.

This spring we are in a new section of Luke examining the "Call of the King," asking the question, "What does it mean for us to follow Jesus in this time, in this place, with our particular life circumstances?" In my role as pastor, I often get a front row seat to the difficult choices that many of you make in your commitment to follow Jesus even when it is costly. Here are just a few situations I've observed from our own members:

- A man who lost his job because when he was asked to make questionable ethical decisions, he refused, and in turn was terminated.
- A high school student who is one of the only Christians in her extracurricular group at school, and is often teased, yet has loved her peers with an extraordinary heart of kindness and humility.

[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

Tim Latham
Director of Young Adult Ministries

Rev. Richard Haney
Parish Associate

Rev. Nan Clarke
Parish Associate for
Care Ministries

**THIRD PRESS DEADLINE FOR
MAY: Friday, May 13**
Submit to: beccap@thirdrva.org

- A young man who wrestles with same-sex attraction who has chosen not to act on his sexual desires and remain in singleness and chastity, despite the great emotional toll it takes.
- A couple in a challenging marriage that has chosen to remain together and work hard through their conflicts, despite the advice of friends who have advised them to get divorced.
- A couple who has chosen to give extraordinary amounts of money away and limit their own lifestyle to great simplicity in order to free up more money for others.
- A woman who has suffered tremendously with chronic illness, has struggled greatly with anxiety and doubt, yet continues to praise God and seek to make his goodness known despite her trials.

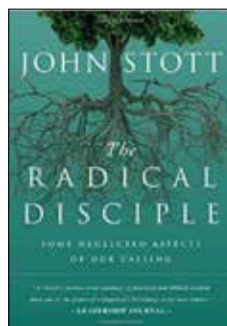
These are just a few of many situations that have challenged me personally to examine my own journey of following Jesus. What is common to each of these people is their allegiance to Jesus and their willingness to accept the costly aspects of following him, not just the demands of Jesus that suit them.

As we continue to hear the call of Jesus, I invite you to examine your own life and consider how Jesus is calling you freshly to follow him. What might he be asking you to give up? What personal character flaw or besetting sin might he be calling you to work on? What risks is he calling you to take? What costly action might be required of you and your family to follow Jesus faithfully?

Above all, let's remember that we take up our cross to follow Jesus not to earn anything from him or to gather up brownie points in heaven. Everything necessary for our salvation has already been accomplished for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. So why do we take up our cross for Jesus? Because he has taken up his own cross for us, and because there is no better life than the one spent following him.

Grace and peace of our Savior+
Corey

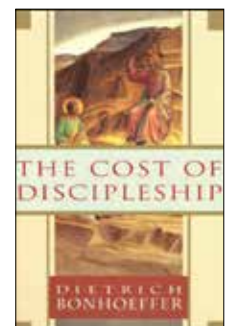
SOME GREAT BOOKS ON DISCIPLESHIP:



The Radical Disciple
John Stott



The Divine Conspiracy
Dallas Willard



The Cost of Discipleship
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

THE CALL OF THE KING: A REFLECTION ON OUR VISUAL

THE CALLING OF SAINT MATTHEW (Caravaggio)

Each of our series of sermons on the Gospel of Luke is represented by an image capturing a pivotal moment in the story. As we explore the power and costs of following Jesus in “The Call of the King,” our image is Caravaggio’s “The Calling of Saint Matthew,” painted 1599-1600 for the San Luigi dei Francesi church in Rome.

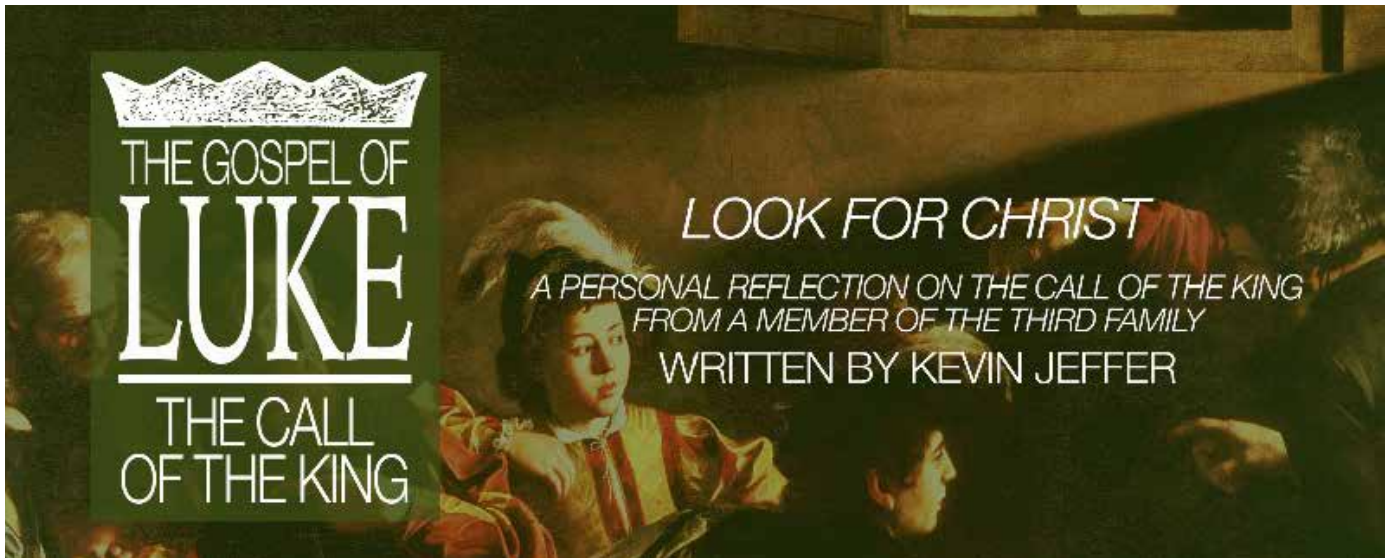
The painting (roughly 10½ feet square) depicts the incident described in Luke 5:7 and Matthew 9:9, when Jesus identifies a tax collector known as both Levi and Matthew, inviting

him to become his disciple. Caravaggio shows Matthew as a middle-aged man with a red beard, sitting with a motley crew of four other men, dressed in the fashion of Caravaggio’s own time and looking like the card-players, musicians, and other shady characters that so often appear in the painter’s work. Jesus enters from the right with the apostle Peter and motions across the room with a gesture that both singles Matthew out and calls him to get up and follow—a gesture that is reinforced by the beam of sun illuminating the table and the tax collector, himself.

To the outcasts gathered there it seems an unlikely place for a rabbi to show up—a strange place for the light of God to break in. In fact, Matthew seems to be caught in the act of saying “Who, me? Surely you mean someone else!” But Jesus did mean him, and Christ’s gaze is direct and unwavering. We may also find ourselves to be unlikely or unwilling disciples, but Jesus calls to each of us, too, wherever we are, and invites us to walk in his footsteps. In that moment, we must answer the same question Matthew faces in this painting: “Will I follow Jesus, the King?”

Reflection written by Mark Sprinkle





I was asked how I'm responding to the call of Christ in the hard places of my life.

Candidly, the question had me stumped. I tend to think of "the call of Christ" as something that comes down and inserts itself into the flow of my life, and my job is to (a) perceive it and (b) follow it.

But that's not how my life really works. It seems to me that the call of Christ is, instead, woven into the very fabric of my life. It's there all the time, part of my DNA.

And so, it doesn't seem to me that the call of Christ has led me into any particularly hard times in my life. Unless you mean my ongoing commitment to be kind to my wife, instead of taking out my frustrations on her. That's hard. Not because of her, but because of me.

And it doesn't feel like the call of Christ has put me out of step with the people around me. Unless you mean how I work hard to resist my consumerist tendencies. But that feels like it's just who I am.

What IS helpful and meaningful for me is to look at how the hard times in my life help me to know Jesus better. To understand his character more deeply. For instance, Margarete and I have spent a LOT of time advocating on Nick's behalf. In school. With the insurance company. The legal system. At church.

And that helps me understand more deeply what it means that Christ is my Advocate. He pleads on my behalf. He put himself in harm's way to protect me. He's on my side, always. I know he's got my back.

Same thing with Nick's scars. With my suffering. The "hard places" in my life point me back toward Christ and his character ... when I pay attention.


And so far as being out of step with the people around me, I've come to understand that the people around me are hurting a lot more than I'd think just by looking at them. Including that guy who cut me off in traffic.

So rather than looking for Christ's call in my life, I look for Christ. Who says, "Follow me -- I've got your back."

To read more of Kevin's reflections, go to thirdrva.org/blog.

VBS 2016 More than Gold

Run the race...Fix your eyes on Jesus! Hebrews 12:2



Join us for this week-long exploration of scripture, music, crafts, recreation and more! Our VBS is entirely homegrown, and this year's curriculum will be Olympic-themed! VBS is for children ages 4 (by September 30, 2016) through rising 5th grade, and for the younger children (under 4) of our volunteers.

Volunteers are an essential part of making VBS a success! All volunteer positions and descriptions will be listed online.

For more info and to sign up, visit our VBS event page:

thirdrva.org/vbs

Registration closes June 10, or when we meet capacity.



EXPERIENCE ISRAEL

Reflections from Third's Trip to the Holy Land

At the end of March, a group from Third left the budding spring of Richmond for an opportunity to tour the Holy Land. The group walked where Jesus walked, touring Israel and Jordan, and spent Easter morning at the historical site of Christ's tomb.

If you'd like to be a part of this trip in the future, please get in touch with Tom Barila at tomb@thirdrva.org.





The Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee was a special place for me. It was where Jesus began to preach the Kingdom of God. It was where he spent most of his public life, did most of his teaching, and worked many of his miracles. God spoke to my heart that day, and I was feeling so much love and joy! My faith in the promises of God was renewed. As I looked out into the sea I could picture Jesus walking on the stormy water. I thought about the "storms" of life we all encounter. I know I am never alone during these storms, and that I need to trust Him one day at a time!

Nancy Bruce

The tour of Israel was an unforgettable experience of a lifetime. Seeing, walking, and worshiping in places where Jesus actually walked, preached and healed during his ministry was inspiring and deepened our faith and understanding. Celebrating Easter at the Garden Tomb and sharing communion with our fellow believers from Third was a spiritually emotional and bonding experience. The trip preparation classes by Tom Barila and Paul Klassen and others proved invaluable. Memories of the trip will be life lasting as will the many new friendships that developed.

Becky and Rick Wetzel



Garden of Gethsemane



Headwaters of the Jordan River

EXPLORING RACE AND THE CHURCH

One of our five strategic objectives for the coming years is to “Love Our Neighbors.” Included in that objective is the recognition that the West End in particular and Richmond in general is changing demographically, especially when it comes to the growth of non-white populations. In fact, by 2020, 45% of people within the 5 mile radius of Third will be non-white.

One of the ways we can develop in this area is to grow in our understanding and awareness of the issues. Over the next few months, along with numerous other evangelical Reformed churches in town, we are co-sponsoring a series of conversations that will address the issue of race and the church. Considering our own strategic moment, as well as the larger contemporary conversations about race in our nation, I’m excited about what we will learn from these excellent speakers about how we as followers of Jesus can engage in these important topics.

Corey Widmer

For more info on any of the speakers or lectures, visit: raceandthechurch.com		
May 14, 2016 9:00 a.m. City Church 1627 Monument Ave	<i>Justice: The Church's Commission</i> Speaker: Leonce Crump	Where is injustice within the walls of the church? And outside of the church? And how can we as a church begin to address it?
July 16, 2016 9:00 a.m. Veritas 3400 Brook Road	<i>Understanding the Heartcry of #blacklivesmatter</i> Speaker: Jemar Tisby	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?
Sept. 10, 2016 9:00 a.m. Crown & Joy Church 1000 Westover Hills Blvd	<i>Our Behavior Matters: Are We Behaving Like the Church or the World?</i> Speaker: Carl Ellis	The dominant and sub-dominant culture paradigms influence the way we behave in the world and in the church. How might we better recognize which paradigm we’re operating on?
Sept. 10, 2016 9:00 a.m. Crown & Joy Church 1000 Westover Hills Blvd	<i>Welcome to the Margins: What the Evangelical Church Can Learn from Persecuted Christians</i> Speaker: Karen Ellis	Persecution affects all our culture paradigms. What has it done around the world as Muslims persecute Christians? How might persecution in the USA affect that paradigm?
Nov. 19, 2016 9:00 a.m. Sycamore Presbyterian 510 Coalfield Road	<i>The Elusive Dream: Pursuing Diversity in Predominately White Churches</i> Speaker: David Prince	We all embrace the call for the nations to confess Christ as Lord. But if our context is predominantly white, is it possible? How can others know we love and respect them as image-bearers?
Nov. 19, 2016 9:00 a.m. Sycamore Presbyterian 510 Coalfield Road	<i>Walking the Path of Love</i> Speaker: George Robertson	Having conversation about race in an historic church in the south is incredibly hard. George Robertson, Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Augusta, GA, will discuss the development of these conversations in his congregation.

VOLUNTEER AT THE THIRD OFFICE

With summer approaching, we need some help around the office!

Would you like to spend some time at the Third offices, meeting visitors and lending a helping hand? Currently, we're looking for folks to fill a few roles. We need help on:

- Tuesdays
- Wednesday afternoons
- People willing to be called on an as-needed basis.

Our shifts are typically split, two per day. The morning shift is from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and the afternoon shift is from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Office Volunteers: Stefanie Holt and Emily Oostdyke

Ready to help? Let Miranda know by giving her a call, (282-4645 ext. 133) or shooting her an [email \(mirandap@thirdrva.org\)](mailto:mirandap@thirdrva.org).

NOTES FROM THE THIRD FAMILY

Dear Third Congregation,

Thank you so much for your generous love during the illness and death of our much-loved wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother, June Dean. Our entire family is very thankful for your sustaining prayers, visits, cards, and food. Our gratitude for your love and compassion is overflowing.

For the ministry of "this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God." (2 Corinthians 9:12)

Sincerely,

John Dean
Gayle and Peter Mellis
Jessica, Robert and Caleb Cochrane

Dear Third Church friends,

Thank you so much for all the cards, letters and phone calls I have received during my recovery. I am making good progress with my physical therapy and healing. Thank you for all your care and concern.

Allen Lawrence

FAMILY MINISTRY



FAMILY MYSTERY NIGHT: SCAVENGER HUNT

Set aside the following day and time:

Saturday, May 21
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

You'll be sent an email on Thursday, May 19 telling you where to go and what to bring. (Hint: the location is in the West End!) And yes, there will be prizes!

Fun for kids of all ages, including parents!

[Sign up today on the website!](#)

MOSAIC SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY:

The Mosaic Scholarship Fund exists to help parishioners with scholarships to summer camps for kids with special needs, or to conferences, workshops, and continuing education classes involving issues around disabilities. The money is available for: 1) professionals, 2) parents or caregivers, and 3) children with disabilities.

Some examples of how the money could be used are:

- a professional workshop for a therapist or special education teacher from church who might otherwise not be able to attend due to limited finances from their organization or school
- a training workshop or conference on autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or education advocacy for a parent of a child with special needs
- Easter Seals summer camp, JCC specialty camp, or Unique Kids soccer camp for a child with a disability

Decision Making Principles:

1. Preference will be given to those active in Mosaic activities, then to church members and regular attenders, lastly to those outside the church.
2. Total amount that can be granted for a request is \$1000. Requests can be repeated in subsequent years.
3. Since funds are limited and there is value in personal investment, grants will be given at a percentage not to exceed 75% of the total cost of the request.

A subcommittee of the Mosaic Leadership Team will make decisions on requests.

Procedure for Application

Requests for funds should be made in writing to Kathy White, Associate Director of Family Ministries, and should include, if possible, a brochure or flyer describing the event, program, or camp, along with published costs for the program for which support is requested. Requests should be submitted by May 15th. [Contact Kathy White with any questions: kathyw@thirdrva.org.](#)

GALLERY 500

I am inspired by the landscapes that surround me. The morning colors of the marshes and an evening sunset on a summer family vacation at the beach. The mid-day powerful surf. Cool colors on a winter day at the river and the lone pine tree at the edge of the field.

Betsy McCray

"For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God."

Romans 1:20



Summer Evening



Winter River

Visit Gallery 500 in the 500 Forest Ave office building front lobby to see Betsy McCray's art. If you're a Third artist and would like to have your art displayed in Gallery 500, please contact Peggy Larmore at pwlarmore@gmail.com.

LOOKING TOWARD SUMMER

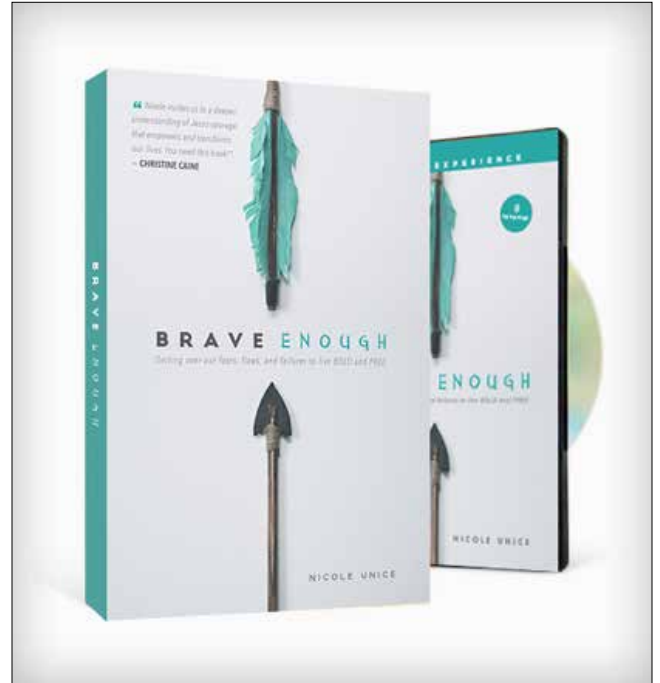
WOMEN'S SUMMER STUDY

Join the women of Third for our annual Summer Study together. We'll meet on Wednesday evenings beginning July 13, and running through August 24 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

This year we'll be studying Nicole Unice's new book *Brave Enough*.

Registration opens soon! Check back.

Cost: \$20, includes the book.



SUMMER COLLEGE MINISTRY KICKOFF: MAY 17



This summer, we will engage in three integral movements: Up - deepening our relationship with God, In - deepening our relationship with each other, and Out - deepening our relationship with those around us.

Our kickoff cookout will begin this process with an "Up" as Corey discusses God's will for our lives. Please come over to the Redmond household (9709 Old Club Trace) on **May 17 at 6:30 p.m.** for food, fellowship, and more details.

Contact [Tim Latham \(timl@thirdrva.org\)](mailto:timl@thirdrva.org) with any questions or to make sure your student is on the contact list.

EVENT RECAPS: *Journey to the Cross*

On Good Friday, 283 adults and children walked through our 'Journey to the Cross,' our personal, prayerful, and reflective experience of Christ's final hours. Many from the Third family came to participate, as did neighbors and friends.

Some comments at the end of the journey...

"Very moving – it was a blessing to have time for quiet reflection"

"Thank you for sharing your gifts of creativity and art. We love bringing our kids. My daughter was so excited to come this year. This will be part of her beautiful memories of Christ and His Church community."

"Very helpful, especially Peter's denial – I cried."

"Blessed my soul! Fresh new commitment to God."

"I'm grateful to Jesus. The Lord met me in the Journey – partly by way of the reflections and experiences, but also by observing the people: children running headlong into the experience, a mother-daughter pair praying under a shared shawl, and fellow sisters and brothers receiving Jesus' love."



MAY CALENDAR

**May
1**
9:45 - 11:00 a.m.
Parlor

WELCOME COFFEE

If you are new to Third, or if you meet someone new to Third, please join us for our Welcome Coffee in the Parlor from 9:45-11:00 a.m.

This is a time when visitors can meet Corey and some of our lay leaders, see a short video about the vision and mission of Third, and find ways to connect at Third.



**May
6-7**
6:00 p.m. -
11:00 a.m.

CLUB 56 RETREAT

5th and 6th grade students are invited to this annual retreat. Students will hear from a speaker, play games, eat together, and spend quiet time in God's word. Friends are welcome too!

Sign up online, registration is required.



**May
14**
10:00 a.m.
Parlor

SHILOH: COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP

Shiloh is a ministry at Third that provides support for those grieving the loss of their unborn baby or longing for a child yet to be conceived.

Join us in May for coffee and a devotional gathering for women and their husbands.

If you would like to come, please [contact Caroline \(cmhutton6@gmail.com\)](mailto:cmhutton6@gmail.com) or [Charlotte \(charlotte.jean.gage@gmail.com\)](mailto:charlotte.jean.gage@gmail.com) to RSVP. Childcare can be made available if requested by May 7th.



**May
21**
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

THIRD FAMILY MYSTERY NIGHT: SCAVENGER HUNT

You'll be sent an email on Thursday, May 19 telling you where to go and what to bring. (Hint: the location is in the West End!) And yes, there will be prizes!

Sign up online, registration is required!



JUNE/JULY CALENDAR

**June
5**

GILLETTE GAMES

Mark your calendar for this annual youth event. Shaving cream, games, lots of mess, lots of fun.

Contact Rick (rickh@thirdrva.org) or Andrea (andreaw@thirdrva.org) with questions.



**June
13**

8:45 a.m. -
2:00 p.m.

ANNUAL SAM JACKSON GOLF TOURNAMENT

Mark your calendar for this annual fundraiser event, organized by Third Golfers in Fellowship. More info and details to come.

Sign up today! Contact Tom Barila with questions.



**June 27-
July 1**

9:00 a.m. - Noon

VBS: Go for Gold!

Every summer Third Church hosts over 200 children for a week of Bible exploration, fun, and games during Vacation Bible School (VBS). This summer we will use a curriculum written by a team from Third Church! This Olympic-themed VBS, More Than Gold, will feature men and women from Scripture who displayed character traits like trust in God, commitment, endurance and more.

Sign up now! Registration closes when we reach capacity.



**July
11-15**

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

SPORTS SKILLS CAMP

This awesome week includes teaching soccer and basketball skills combined with character-building devotions and sharing of the Gospel! Invite your friends.

Sign up today! Contact Tom Barila with questions.



Third Church
500 Forest Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23229
804.282.4645



SUBSCRIBE TO THIRD PRESS DIGITAL & MORE!

As we wrote last month, we've started to send this publication out via email! (You may be reading this from your computer as we speak!) However, if you picked this up at the church, and would like to be on the mailing list, go to:

THIRDRVA.ORG/SIGNUP

There, you'll be prompted to sign up for any of our mailings, including mailings from individual ministries you want to be in-the-know about.

Have questions? Contact Becca Payne (beccap@thirdrva.org) for any support or help.

