



Chaplains' Corner

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Rainbow Rock

Last weekend I took my girls to the Ice Age Festival in Martinsville at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. It's a fun museum, not large, and the University of Lynchburg partners with them for archaeology digs in Wyoming. We went with friends, and the other mom of the group bought each girl a rock to remember the day. The rocks looked like ice, clear with bubbles and fissures and polished smooth. (For the geologists among us I think they are smoky quartz.) The rocks are "special rocks." It turns out each rock out has a rainbow in it. If you move the rock around and get it just right, you can see a rainbow. The rainbows appear at the fissures, in the cracks. Without the fault lines it would just be a pretty rock, but without the hidden complexity and colors.

Like so many of us, the rainbows in our lives appear because of the cracks. The surface scars may add character, and they may make us look more interesting; but those deep cracks where our woundedness never quite heals are the moments in our lives where hope appears.

In a community this size few weeks go by without someone in our community experiencing a death. Most weeks someone has a surgery. Most months someone in our community is hospitalized for a mental health crisis. Many of our students do not have health insurance and go without medical care...at least until they cannot wait. There are the car accidents and the utilities that get shut off. There are those who fall behind on rent and mortgages. Marriages and relationships end. Sexual assault victims seek resources and rise up to tell their stories. Students return from the semester break to the safest home they have known...a college residence hall. In a community this size and this diverse there is so much going on that it is often hard to pause and take a breath.

Institutions and communities are made up of imperfect people, each trying to do their best. We are at our best when we trust that others are trying to do their best and when we have empathy for what is going on in their lives. And just when you think that you can extend that much grace, you sit down to watch the news and Senate trial. This is real life.

Real life is also those small joys of seeing a child run across the Dell. Seeing a student understand a concept. Listening to students practice for a concert and seeing our athletes excel. We balance out with weddings and babies and grandbabies, and commencement is truly a great few days. There are breakthroughs and personal victories. A former student worker came by the office to share her new baby. Real life is taking time to notice the beauty of the mountains and the crisp breeze. I'm even ready for a few pristine snowflakes.

Some weeks my heart is heavy with all that goes on in our community. This has been one of those weeks, and so I have been rereading Henri Nouwen, but I've also been thinking about the rainbows in the cracks of the rock. Without the woundedness and the cracks, there are not the hidden rainbows.

Every time there are losses, there are choices to be made. You choose to live your losses as passages to anger, blame, hatred, depression and resentment, or you choose to let these losses be passages to something new, something wider, and deeper.

~ Henri Nouwen

By Stephanie McLemore
Chaplain and Director of Church Relations

Dates to Remember

| Date/Time/Location | Event | Description |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, February 18 7 p.m. Hopwood Auditorium | Lecture by Walker Bristol, M.Div. Tufts Humanist Chaplain | Lecture Title— "Humanism and Atheism Today: New and Old Ways of Making Meaning in a Changing World" |

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

For a list of our regularly scheduled meetings during the academic year, go to the [Spiritual Life webpage](#) and click on "Spiritual Organizations on Campus."

The Chaplains' Corner is a newsletter published by the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) at the University of Lynchburg to share campus concerns and updates, spiritual life events and activities, and words for the journey written by the Spiritual Life Center staff. If you have a joy or concern you'd like to share with the campus community, please [e-mail](#) the SLC office or call 434.544.8348. We only share concerns or joys, via newsletter or e-mail, with permission. Current and previous issues of the Chaplain's Corner (in PDF format) are on the SLC [page](#) of the University of Lynchburg website.

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Concerns

Our sympathies are extended to:

- **Dr. Robert Canida** (Office of Equity and Inclusion), whose grandmother, Vandrous Suber (age 96) died on January 20, 2020.
- **Celena Miller** (Health & Counseling) on the death of her mother. Elizabeth Ruth Jenkins Martin died on January 18, 2020. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Congrats

Congratulations to:

- **Savannah Bower** (Theatre) and her husband, Matt, who welcomed the newest member of their family, Gavin Reed Bower. He was born on December 29th at 2:46 a.m., weighing in at 3 lbs, 11 oz. and 17.1 inches long. All family members are doing well and are excited to have him home.



Gavin Reed Bower

Campus Worship Opportunities

- **Quaker Meeting** - 10:30 a.m. Sundays at the Spiritual Life Center.
- **Roman Catholic Mass** - weekly at 4:30 p.m. Sundays in Snidow Chapel.
- **Weekly Vespers** - 9 p.m. Sundays in Snidow Chapel. Vespers will resume on February 16th.