



**Richmond Hill United Church**  
An Affirming Ministry



**February 21, 2021: First Sunday in Lent**

The following resource is offered to help you worship at home, either on your own or online. Worship is livestreamed on Zoom. Log-in details are sent weekly by email to those on RHUC's contact list. For a recording of the service, click the following link: [www.facebook.com/RichmondHillUnitedChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/RichmondHillUnitedChurch/). This will take you to our Facebook page. We may be apart physically but we are still a community of faith spiritually, and digitally.

**Centred in Christ**

Welcome and Lighting the Community Candle: *As the candle in the sanctuary is lit, you are invited to light your own candle at home. We may be dispersed, but together we shine in love.*

Acknowledgement of the Land: *We take time to give thanks for the land and for the Indigenous communities who continue to steward it. We extend greetings in Cree, Spanish and Cantonese.*

Hymn: "Come Let Us to the God of Love" (*Voices United #653*)

- 1. Come, let us to the God of love  
with contrite hearts return;  
our God is gracious, nor will leave  
the desolate to mourn.**
- 2. God's voice commands the tempest forth,  
and stills the stormy wave;  
and though God's arm be strong to smite,  
'tis also strong to save.**
- 3. Long has the night of sorrow reigned;  
the dawn shall bring us light;  
God shall appear, and we shall rise  
with gladness at that sight.**
- 4. As dew upon the tender herb,  
diffusing fragrance round;  
as showers that usher in the spring,  
and cheer the thirsty ground,**
- 5. So shall God's presence bless our souls,  
and shed a joyful light;  
that hallowed morn shall chase away  
the sorrows of the night.**

Opening Prayer

Eternal Love, we pause in gratitude for this season of prayer and renewal. Trusting that you are always with us, we pray that in your compassion, we may continue to grow in grace, ever deepening our commitment to walk in the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

Reflective Reading: *Each Sunday we slowly read a spiritual text. You are invited to listen for a word or phrase that grabs your attention and take time to consider its significance for you. This week we reflect on an excerpt from "Love in Action", a sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

“Look down through the centuries and see how the oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of revenge. ‘Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.’ . . . In spite of the fact that the law of revenge solves no social problems, men continue to go its disastrous way. . . . Jesus eloquently affirmed from the cross a higher law. . . . He did not seek to overcome evil with evil. He overcame evil with good. Although crucified by hate, he responded with radical love. What a magnificent lesson. Generations will continue to rise and fall, men will continue to worship the god of revenge and bow before the altar of retaliation, but ever and again this noble lesson from Calvary will come as a nagging reminder that only goodness can drive out evil, only love can conquer hate.”

Hymn: “Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery” (*Voices United* #121, v. 1 and 2)

- 1. Tree of life and awesome mystery, in your death we are reborn,  
though you die in all of history, still you rise with every morn,  
still you rise with every morn.**
- 2. Seed that dies to rise in glory, may we see ourselves in you,  
if we learn to live your story, we may die to rise anew,  
we may die to rise anew.**

### **Reflecting Together as a Community**

Prayer of Confession (composed and led by Julia Ye):

*As part of the prayer, we sing Kyrie Eleison (More Voices #67). One: Kyrie eleison. All: Kyrie eleison. One: Christe eleison. All: Christe eleison. One: Kyrie eleison. All: Kyrie eleison.*

Reading: John 15:9-17 (read by Donna DeVita)

Jesus said to his disciples, “As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete. This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you. No one has greater love than to give up one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I don’t call you servants any longer, because servants don’t know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you. You didn’t choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last. As a result, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. I give you these commandments so that you can love each other.”

Anthem: “O Jesus Every Moment” (Philip Stopford; sung by Chancel Choir)

Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22 (read by Donna DeVita)

Christ himself suffered on account of sins, once for all, the righteous one on behalf of the unrighteous. He did this in order to bring you into the presence of God. Christ was put to death as a human, but made alive by the Spirit. And it was by the Spirit that he went to preach to the spirits in prison. In the past, these spirits were disobedient—when God patiently waited during the time of Noah. Noah built an ark in which a few (that is, eight) lives were rescued through water. Baptism is like that. It saves you now—not because it removes dirt from your body but because it is the mark of a good conscience toward God. Your salvation comes through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at God’s right side. Now that he has gone into heaven, he rules over all angels, authorities, and powers.

Message: “The Depth of Love” (preached by Rev. James Ravenscroft)

Minute for Meditation: “Song without Words 6” (Felix Mendelssohn)

## Sharing in a Spirit of Gratitude

Prayers of the People (composed and read by Peg Hiscoke)

The Prayer of Jesus

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

MAP Minute

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy One, Jesus' words about laying down one's life cuts to the heart. It lays bare the true cost of love. And yet rather than holding us back, it inspires us to do more, to give of ourselves in service of others and with a commitment to justice and peace in our world. **Amen.**

### Called beyond Ourselves to Minister to the World

Hymn: "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights" (VU #108, v 1-4)

- 1. Throughout these Lenten days and nights, we turn to walk the inward way, where, meeting Christ, our guide and light, we live in hope till Easter day.**
- 2. The pilgrim Christ, the Lamb of God, who found in weakness greater power embraces us, though lost and flawed, and leads us to his rising hour.**
- 3. We bear the silence, cross and pain of human burdens, human strife, while sisters, brothers help sustain our courage till the feast of life.**
- 4. And though the road is hard and steep, the Spirit ever calls us on through Calvary's dying, dark and deep, until we see the coming dawn.**

Sung Blessing ("Celtic Prayer" by Barry Peters)

**May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you on the road.  
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.  
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart open up your hearts to love.  
May you see the face of Christ in ev'ry one you meet,  
and may ev'ryone you meet see the face of Christ in you.  
Amen. Amen.**

Postlude: "Bransles de Champagne" (Claude Gervaise)