



# Richmond Hill United Church

An Affirming Ministry



## May 2, 2021: Fifth Sunday in Easter (Anniversary Sunday and Annual General Meeting)

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

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.*

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 Ojibway, Cantonese and Spanish.*

A Word to Ponder: Excerpt from “On the Pulse of Morning” by Maya Angelou

Lift up your eyes upon  
This day breaking for you.  
Give birth again  
To the dream.

Women, children, men,  
Take it into the palms of your hands,  
Mold it into the shape of your most  
Private need. Sculpt it into  
The image of your most public self.  
Lift up your hearts  
Each new hour holds new chances  
For a new beginning.  
Do not be wedded forever  
To fear, yoked eternally  
To brutishness.

The horizon leans forward,  
Offering you space to place new steps of change.  
Here, on the pulse of this fine day  
You may have the courage  
To look up and out and upon me, the  
Rock, the River, the Tree, your country.  
No less to Midas than the mendicant.  
No less to you now than the mastodon then.

Here, on the pulse of this new day  
You may have the grace to look up and out  
And into your sister's eyes, and into  
Your brother's face, your country  
And say simply  
Very simply  
With hope—  
Good morning.

Responsive Prayer:

One: Breaking Dawn, we give thanks for the gift of this new day,

**All: for the chance once more to rise in your love.**

One: As you hold all of life in grace and care,

**All: so may we live this day doing the same.**

One: May we be open to the gift of your renewing presence,

**All: and so to bear to all the abundant life that you so freely give.**

**In the name of the Risen Christ, we pray. Amen.**

Hymn: "New Every Morning Is the Love" (*Voices United* #405)

- 1. New every morning is the love our wakening and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought, restored to life and power of thought.**
- 2. New mercies each returning day hover around us while we pray;  
new perils past, new sins forgiven, new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.**
- 3. If on our daily course our mind beset to hallow all we find,  
new treasures still of countless price God will provide for sacrifice.**
- 4. The trivial round, the common task, will furnish all we ought to ask,  
room to deny ourselves, a road to bring us daily nearer God.**
- 5. Only, O God, in your dear love fit us for perfect rest above;  
And help us this and every day, to live more nearly as we pray.**

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

Prayer of New Life

God of all that is, was and is yet to be,  
as we pray together on this Anniversary Sunday,  
we do so thankful for the path walked by those who came before us.  
In their witness of love and faith, they showed us the life that is possible  
when we give freely of ourselves for others.  
In our time may we do the same,  
sharing freely that those who follow the path we have walked  
may also receive the promise of new life in you. **Amen.**

Reading: John 15:1-5 (read by Lyn May)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper who removes any of my branches that don’t produce fruit, and trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can’t produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can’t produce fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit.”

Anthem: “Love Your Neighbour” (arranged by Michael Hellman; sung by the Chancel Choir)

Reading: 1 John 4:7-13, 18-21 (read by Lyn May)

Dear friends, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love. This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent his only Son into the world so that we can live through him. This is love: it is not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent the Son as the redeeming sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and God’s love is made perfect in us. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. We love because God first loved us. Those who say, “I love God” and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don’t love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! This is the commandment we have received: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

Message: “Abiding in Love” (preached by Rev. James Ravenscroft)

A Minute for Meditation: “Meditation on ‘Slane’” (Charles Callahan)

### **Sharing in a Spirit of Gratitude**

Affirmation of Faith: *We share words of faith from different times and places. Today we share a statement from the Iona Community.*

**All: We believe that God is present in the darkness before dawn; in the waiting and uncertainty where fear and courage join hands, conflict and caring link arms, and the sun rises over barbed wire. We believe in a with-us God who sits down in our midst and shares our humanity. We affirm a faith that takes us beyond the safe place: into action and vulnerability and into the streets. We commit ourselves to work for change and put ourselves on the line;**

**to bear responsibility, take risks, live powerfully and face humiliation; to stand with those on the edge; to choose life and be used by the Spirit for God's new community of hope. Amen.**

Prayers of the People (composed and read by Jane Wedlock)

The Prayer of Jesus (*Voices United*, #959):

**All sing: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.**

A Minute from the Board

### **Called beyond Ourselves to Minister to the World**

Hymn: "The Church of Christ in Every Age" (*Voices United* #601)

- 1. The church of Christ in every age, best by change but Spirit led, must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead.**
- 2. Across the world, across the street the victims of injustice cry for shelter and for bread to eat and never live until they die.**
- 3. Then let the servant church arise, a caring church that longs to be a partner in Christ's sacrifice and clothed in Christ's humanity.**
- 4. For Christ alone, whose blood was shed, can cure the fever in our blood, And teach us how to share our bread and feed the starving multitude.**
- 5. We have no mission but to serve in full obedience to our Lord: To care for all without reserve and spread Christ's liberating word.**

Blessing and Sending Forth:

One: Christ is Risen!

**All: Christ is Risen indeed!**

One: Go with this blessing:

Rest in the love of the God who creates us,  
rise in the grace of the Christ who sets us free,  
rejoice in the power of the Spirit who makes us one.

**All: Amen.**

One: Go in peace to serve the Risen Christ in love.

**All Thanks be to God.**

Postlude: "Bransles de Champagne" (Claude Gervaise)