

## Listening Circles

Spring is here!...Time for planning at RHUC!

In March at the AGM we shared that RHUC is engaging Rev. Karen Hilfman Millson as a facilitator to bring to us her “**Significant Circles**” process. We are pleased to now share with you the first step in the process that we will be engaged in through 2017.

**PURPOSE...**To identify our longer term Missional Goals that may lead to answers about the future of the Building and Long Term Financial Strength of the Church.

**GOALS...**The Four Circle Process: provides opportunity for all voices to be heard in order for the gathered wisdom to identify mission and next steps.

The process creates a culture that is safe and respectful for people to share their wisdom and creativity, to enhance the vision that longs to emerge within the community. There will be a sense of “buy-in” by providing significant opportunity for people in the congregation to feel that their wisdom has been combined with the wisdom of others in regard to the future direction of the church.

**FIRST PROCESS: LISTENING CIRCLES...**Listening Circles create opportunity for Significant Conversations in which we listen deeply to each other, to the wisdom within ourselves, to the nudges and guidance of Spirit for the purpose of allowing future possibilities to emerge.

We are hoping that everyone in the congregation will be able to attend a circle.

The Process includes open ended questions to encourage a wide variety of insights to be shared. There is opportunity for people to reflect on the things they appreciate in their congregation. The intention is to listen, and so no ideas offered will be developed or debated at this stage of the process. This will be a time to gather possibilities that will become the basis of ongoing times of discernment and conversation at a later date.

A key foundational concept to the Listening Circle Process is the understanding that when we connect to our authentic self, to who we are as ones beloved by God, we move beyond the inner and outer voices of judgement, cynicism, and fear, and connect to our core wisdom from which possibilities emerge. The Listening Circle Process is also based on the perspective that we have the answers within us and amongst us which become clear when we listen deeply and share honestly.

The target time period for the Listening Circles is after Easter 2017 in May and possibly into early June 2017.

**CIRCLE MEETINGS...**are held in homes and consist of up to 9 people plus the facilitation team of three. Each meeting lasts 2 hours with arrival 15 minutes ahead.

There will be Circles scheduled in mornings, afternoons, evenings and weekends.

The Host provides chairs (not around a table) and maybe some light refreshments...but not a meal. The Host has the opportunity to invite people of their choice.

Once a schedule is established the congregation will be invited to select the time and location that most suits their personal schedule and fill in to the Hosts lists.

### **WE WOULD LIKE YOUR HELP, PLEASE!**

**Consider whether you would be willing to Host a Circle. I can provide more detail before you finalist your decision, if that helps. We are also looking for 2 people to assist in Co-ordinating and Scheduling Circle Meetings during the next 6 weeks. ...and we need 1 or 2 people that can attend circle meetings and record (laptop needed)**

**Thank you for your support.**

Terry Davies...[terry.t.davies@gmail.com](mailto:terry.t.davies@gmail.com) or 289-597-2523

## WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

### Worship

#### April 13<sup>th</sup> Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m. Readings focusing on Jesus' last night with his disciples, and the sharing of communion.

#### April 14<sup>th</sup> Good Friday

10:30 a.m. A service with Youth and Chancel Choirs.

#### April 15<sup>th</sup> Holy Saturday

We may not gather in church but we pause with the disciples as they mourn Jesus' death. Many people fast and pray on this day.

#### April 16<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday

10:30 a.m. "Alleluia!" The story of the resurrection and the celebration of communion.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> In these fifty days we celebrate the resurrection as it is lived out in the church as a whole and our lives  
**Upcoming readings for the Season of Easter:** This year our Easter focus will be on readings from the book of Acts. Beginning on April 23, our Sunday scripture readings will be as follows: Acts 10:34-43; Acts 7:55-60; Acts 9:3-9, 17-19; Acts 17:22-31; Acts 1:1-11 and Acts 2:1-21.

12:00 p.m. **Lunch & Learn** with Khwaka Kukubo, Refugee support person from United Church of Canada.

#### April 17<sup>th</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup> The Easter Season

In these fifty days we celebrate the resurrection as it is lived out in the church as a whole and our lives.

### Minister's Message

**Minister's Message:** Throughout Lent we have taken a journey inward. Through each meeting Jesus had – with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the blind man, Martha and Mary – we learned something new about ourselves. Now as we begin the season of Easter, we shift direction and move outward again. That is the gift of Easter. Through the cross we have finally let everything go. But the story doesn't end there. Like the bulb in the ground, we let go of what we were in favour of something new, one where we are intimately connected to everything and everyone. It's in the connections to the world around us that we begin to bloom and grow, that we are reborn.

**Some time away:** Following the busy-ness of Lent and Holy Week, James will be taking some prayer and study days. He will be on retreat on April 19 and 20, in London at the ReVITALize Conference on April 21 and 22, back for Sunday to spend time with our youth, and then away for participation in a Learning Cohort on April 26 and 27.

### Chancel Choir Concert

**'Canadian Choral Celebration' Celebrating Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> year! Sunday, May 7, 2017 @ 7:00 p. m.**

Tickets can be purchased from a choir member or after church in Centennial Hall:

Adult: \$20 Senior/Student: \$15 Family: \$50

## ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

### Prayer Shawl knitting

We will be gathering to knit or crochet prayer shawls again this year during Lent. Finished shawls are given to people who are unwell, grieving, moving away, and also to celebrate a birth or other special occasion as a way of showing that we care and hope the warmth of the shawl will give comfort and joy. Anyone who would like to be part of this ministry is invited to come **Thursday 13 in the Chapel, 5:00 to 6:00**. If this time does not fit into your schedule, please contact Donna Smith 905-884-6307 to see about arranging another time.

## RHUC Book Club

Please join us for our next meeting on Wednesday, **April 26** at 7 p.m. in the Chapel to discuss David Bergen's novel, **Leaving Tomorrow**. David Bergen is a Canadian author and he won the Giller Prize for an earlier novel, *The Age of Hope*, as well as other awards and honours. *"Leaving Tomorrow is a thoughtful, tender, often wry novel of growing up and falling in love. In the small Alberta town of Tomorrow, young Arthur yearns for a larger life. His father loves horses and good books, while his mother follows practicality and her faith. Bev, his rough-edged brother, chooses action over thought. Arthur lives among them—intelligent, curious, romantic and at odds with his surroundings and his religion. His one ally is his adopted cousin, the fearless Isobel. Their mutual admiration for the land, literature, all things French and each other sustains Arthur."*

We have been invited by the Aurora Library to take part in the **OneBook/OneAurora** program this spring and fall. I will be picking up and distributing copies of our book for **May 31st** at the April meeting. The novel is **Natural Order** by **Brian Francis** and we are welcome to take part in an author visit in Aurora this coming fall. (Saturday, October 21 at 2 p.m. at the Aurora Library - free tickets available starting August 1st) *In the novel, author Brian Francis inhabits the mind of an elderly woman who remembers her life in episodes dealing with her son's sexuality and the constraints of small-town society in the '50s and '60s. Key to the narrative is a compelling commentary on how we treat seniors in our society. Natural Order is beautifully written, serious while at the same time, really funny.*

For more details, please speak to the group's facilitator, Sandra Loughton, or call the church office at 905.884.1301. Hope you can join us. Newcomers are always welcome!

## United Church Women – Spring Luncheon



**UCW Spring Luncheon on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup>** at 1:00 p.m. A celebration of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday! Ticket: \$20  
Tickets are available in Centennial Hall after worship service.

## Bible Study

James will be facilitating a Thursday evening bible study sessions from **6:15 – 7:15 PM** in the chapel. We will begin by looking at the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday, looking at their historical and cultural contexts and the wisdom they can offer us.

## Shalom Seekers

This week the group will not meeting this coming week but will resume on **Monday, April 24th** Shalom Seekers to discuss Chapter 8: Contemplation from Diana Butler Bass' book "Christianity for the Rest of Us". If you would like to join us on Mondays, we promise a friendly place and lively discussion in the chapel from 9:30-11:30 a.m. For more information, please speak to Sandra Loughton, Dawn Moon, or Peg Hiscoke.

## H.A.I.R.

H.A.I.R. On **Monday, April 24**, we begin a new DVD study, "Painting the Stars – science, religion and an evolving faith" – part of the Living the Questions series. This 7 week study will finish on Monday, June 12 (excluding Victoria Day). Come join in the discussion at 7:00 pm in the chapel.

## Nurturing our Spirituality

On the first **Tuesday** of the month, **Joanne Scofield** will be offering **Yoga and Meditation** - a yoga practice that will use postures and breathing to bring the body and mind to a place of relaxation and stillness for meditation. The next Yoga and Meditation will be on **Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 7:00 – 8:00 in the Chapel**.

## Special Occasions

Writing to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul urged them: "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep". While we include in our prayers, the names of people who are ill or mourning, we are not always aware of the special occasions which give rise to rejoicing. This column is an effort to rectify that situation. Don't hesitate to add any special occasions you know about.

## HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

## Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological education. Let us hear a reflection from the Rev. Bronwyn Corlett, Ministry and Recruitment Program Coordinator, on what it means to answer the call to ministry.

☒ Why do bad things happen to good people? ☒ What is the right way to grieve? ☒ How do we retell gospel stories in a responsible and inspiring way? ☒ What does it mean to offer a ministry of presence? ☒ Can you explain how Paul's theology evolves throughout his letters? ☒ Can you explain how your own theology has evolved over the years? These are just some of the questions theological education wrestles with. I know my biggest take-away from my theological education was a deeper understanding of how little I knew and the incredible importance of lifelong learning. Challenging assumptions and questioning convictions helps to break open scripture and faith and bring the gospel to life. At other times, the incredible wisdom of those who have come before shines through and lights up the importance of understanding and respecting our history and tradition. To deepen our awareness of what God is calling us to, we need to engage in theological education to discern and deepen our understanding of what it means to be a part of the body of Christ today. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!

## CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

## Annual RHUC Golf Fun Day!

The Saturday after the long weekend, **May 27th at Bathurst Glen Golf Club** with tee times [between noon and 1 p.m.](#) The cost is only \$55 including the BBQ after play. This is a scramble event that allows all levels to play; even those that don't! Please save the date and let George Moon ([georgecmoon@gmail.com](mailto:georgecmoon@gmail.com)) know if you want to be part of the exciting day!

## 'Anything Goes' at the Newmarket Theatre

**April 20-23, 2017** @ the Newmarket Theatre with Glen. Tickets 905-963-5122. [www.wavestagetheatre.com](http://www.wavestagetheatre.com)

'Bon voyage! Set sail on a "de-lovely" cruise through some of Cole Porter's most famous songs. A brassy nightclub singer, a starry-eyed stowaway and Public Enemy No. 13 are booked on a transatlantic luxury liner bound for romance and laughter. Hum along with an easy-to-love score packed with hits including "I Get a Kick Out of You," "You're the Top," "It's De-Lovely," "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" and more! **Glen (James' spouse) is in the production.**

## Blog post

Lent and Easter Services at RHUC <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/len-and-easter-services-and-events-at-richmond-hill-united-church/>

Spiritual Practices for Lent <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/spiritual-practices-for-lent/>

RHUC Bookclub March 2017 <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/03/rhuc-book-club-under-the-visible-life-march-22-2017/>

The Hop <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/02/the-hop/>

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