

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

April 2nd

10:30 a.m. Reading: John 11:1-45. Message: "Roll the Stone Away" by James Ravenscroft.

April 9th Palm / Passion Sunday

10:30 a.m. From the triumph of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to uncertainty as shadows gather.

Minister's Message

While Lent is one six week season that points us toward Easter, a time of pondering with Jesus in his 40 day sojourn in the wilderness, we generally experience it in two sections. This year especially, the first 5 weeks are focused on pondering who Jesus is and how each of us lives out what it means to follow him. But then the mood switches as we enter into Holy Week, with our remembering of Jesus' welcome into Jerusalem as crowds cry out "Hosanna" followed by an unravelling of that victory through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. This Sunday as we conclude the first 5 weeks with the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead, we are pointed toward the next part of our journey. In a section just after what we will hear on Sunday, the Sanhedrin begin plotting to have Jesus killed. Mary will anoint Jesus in anticipation of his burial. Lazarus' being called out of the tomb points us toward the resurrection. In these days when it feels like the world is careening off a cliff and our politicians seem like the plotting of the powerful against the goodness lived out in Jesus, may we look to the hope in the rest of the story. These days will not just be betrayal. There will be an empty tomb at the end of the Holy Week narrative. New life will come.

The readings for next week are divided into 2 sections. The Palm reading is Matthew 21:1-11 and the Passion reading is Matthew 26:14-26-66.

Easter flowers

The congregation is invited to make a donation for the purchase of Easter flowers and include a memorial/celebratory message in the Easter order of service. There will be a table in Centennial Hall after the service today where you will be able to leave your message and donation if you wish. The Sanctuary Committee

Children & Youth Programs needs you!

Our children and youth programs are an important part of Sunday morning worship. We are currently looking for leaders for our Teen Seekers program. Curriculum is available to use and adapt for the program. If this interests you, but you're not sure what to do, Joanne is also available to help with planning. We are looking for leadership on the following dates:

- May 7
- May 28

If you can help out, please speak to Joanne Scofield or email her at jscofield@rogers.com.

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

Prayer Shaw 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 **Thursdays March 30, April 6 and 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 on **Wednesday, April 26th at 7 p.m.** in the Chapel for a discussion of the novel **LEAVING TOMORROW** by David Bergen. There are four copies of this book at the Richmond Hill libraries and four copies at the Aurora library.

The next meeting after that will take place on Wednesday, May 31st and we will be looking at the non-fiction book **The Prison Book Club** by Ann Walmsley. There are two copies of this book at the R.H. library and three copies at the Aurora library.

Please feel free to join us at any time. We had a surprise or unexpected guest at our March meeting. She (who shall remain nameless) came to the church for another meeting, but discovered that she had the wrong night. She ended up staying for the book club meeting and it was great having her there! For more details, please call the Church Office at 905.884.1301 or speak to Sandra Loughton, the group's facilitator. (bookgirl8@hotmail.com)

The UC Observer – renewal and new subscription time!

It is renewal and new subscription time! **Annual subscription cost: \$25/year. Due date: April 10th.** (11 monthly issues - the July/August summer issue is a combined one).

If you would like to renew or start a new subscription, payment by cheque for \$25, payable to Richmond Hill UC, can be put in the offering plate or brought to the office. Thank you!

United Church Women – Spring Luncheon



UCW Spring Luncheon on Saturday April 22nd at 1:00 p.m. A celebration of Canada's 150th Birthday! Ticket: \$20

Getting to Know You

With all the boxes unpacked, Advent and Christmas well behind us and a routine slowly getting established, James would love to start getting to know people better. He's always up for a coffee or tea (and even a cookie). He'd love to come visit people in their homes, at local cafes, or even for a walk in the woods. He's open to individual, family and group visits. The key is a nice visit to get to know each other better. You can reach him by email at james@rhuc.org or by phone either at the church or on his cell – 647.705.2754.

On **Monday, April 3 and April 10, James will be hosting an open house from 1 to 4 pm in his office.** Pop in for a coffee and tea.

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 Monday Shalom Seekers will be discussing chapter six of "Christianity for the Rest of Us." We will be focussing on Discernment or what one minister describes as 'listening with our hearts and souls.' If you would like to join us on Mondays, we promise a friendly place and lively discussion in the chapel from 9:30-11:30am. For more information, please speak to Sandra Loughton, Dawn Moon or Peg Hiscoke.

H.A.I.R.

We will read and discuss the book **Faith versus Fact** by Jerry A. Coyne. The author argues that science and religion are incompatible. Come join the discussion at **7:00 p.m. in the chapel.** Copies are available from Deb in the church office for \$20.00, or pay what you can. It is an easy read and written for the layperson.
April 3 - Chapter 5: Why Does It Matter? (39 pp.)

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.

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, April 4 from 7:00 – 8:00 in the Chapel.**

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Minute for Mission *Called to Be the Church*

A Congregational Giving Program: Our gifts for Mission & Service support congregational stewardship programs. Let us hear a story about the current congregational giving program. How can we help congregational leaders encourage their churches to support both local mission and the ministry of The United Church in Canada and around the globe? How could that support help everyone to live faithfully every day? Responding to these questions, the United Church created Called to Be the Church—an annual resource to help congregations fund their dreams and make a difference in their community and in the world through Mission & Service. Creative folk from across our church collaborated on worship services, sermons, and learning programs to do three things that will help build support for our mission here and as a denomination. The Called to Be the Church congregational giving program helps to ☐ inspire people to see not just where the money goes but also what generosity accomplishes ☐ invite people to join others in making a difference in the lives of many, near and far ☐ thank, to model gratitude for all the gifts we receive from God This giving program is available for all congregations to access in print and online. It is easily adaptable for all to build and sustain generosity in their communities. We sing thanksgiving for congregational stewardship programs that inspire, ask, and thank! If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!

Hands & Hearts for Africa meeting

HANDS AND HEARTS FOR AFRICA MEETING on **SUNDAY APRIL 2 from 12-1pm!**

Hands and Hearts for Africa will be meeting on Sunday April 2 at 12 noon. We will be discussing the latest updates from the Stephen Lewis Foundation, the challenges and successes of its grassroots work to bring about change in the lives of African AIDS families. We will also be planning future events including a special JUNE 3 CONCERT by the singing sensations, THE FOUR MEN. Newcomers are always welcome whether to learn more about the Foundation or to join us as helpers for our events. We also offer teens the opportunity to fulfill community service hours at all our events. Come join us in the Meeting Room, formerly Linda B's office. For more information, please speak to Donna Harrison or Peg Hiscoke or email us at handsandhearts@live.ca

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY

Cash cards

\$151.50 was earned in March! Thank you!

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

Thank you!

Thank you for the two rocking chairs! For now, one will be in the Nursery upstairs and the second chair located in Centennial Hall.

RHUC Quilters

Our next get together is **Saturday April 8th at 12:30 pm in the Garden Room**. Let's see if we can finish our houses and start our wacky web... All are welcome. Feel free to bring a lunch or snack. There is always hot water for tea!

'Anything Goes' at the Newmarket Theatre

April 20-23, 2017 @ the Newmarket Theatre with Glen. Tickets 905-963-5122. 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.**

Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

A Christian celebration of prayer for the Richmond Hill community. **Wednesday, May 24 from 7 – 9:00 a.m.** \$30/person. Keynote speaker: Rev. David Payne, the lead and founding pastor of The Campus Church in York Region. He has written two books: **Hitting the Wall: Finding Perspective When Life Stops Working** and **Run! The Amazing Race**. Hot breakfast, live music, free book. If you are interested in going please let Deb know in the church office and RHUC can book a table (for 10).

Blog post

Lent and Easter Services at RHUC <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/lent-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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