

### Sunday, December 15

12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Parlour  
 12:15 p.m. Faith Exploration  
 Service at Continuing Health – DJ McCready leading and Harrison Gao as accompanist  
 7:00 p.m. Carols by Candlelight - Sanctuary

### Monday, December 16

7:00 p.m. H.A.I.R. – Chapel  
 7:00 p.m. Beavers - gym

### Wednesday, December 18

7:00 p.m. Longest Night Service - Sanctuary

### Thursday, December 19

7:00 p.m. Scouts – gym  
 7:0 p.m. Chancel Choir – 21 Lippincott Crt.

**Minister's message:** Perhaps it is because we are ending one year and beginning another, but I find that along with Thanksgiving, the lead up to Christmas is a time to pause with a sense of gratitude. One thing I am particularly grateful for is this community of faith. Over the past two years we have looked at ourselves with both honesty and a sense of hope, discerning together that we want to be a hub for the wider community. This vision is generous and forward thinking. Ironically, it also honours our heritage. There are times when we may feel like we are being pushed out of "our space" as various groups make use of the buildings that comprise Richmond Hill United Church but these buildings have never really been "our space". Our predecessors built a sanctuary large enough to seat everyone in the village. They didn't do this with aspirations of a Methodist takeover. Rather, they understood that they were creating a space where the whole community could gather from time to time. It is common for Methodist churches in various parts of the country to have been used for town council meetings, as a site for suffragette gatherings, as the local venue for opera concerts, etc. It is in our roots to be spaces where the whole community can find a home. Besides, we are more than a cluster of buildings. Richmond Hill United Church is a group of people seeking to live out the Way of Jesus in our time and place, sharing his love in a variety of activities, some of which take place in these buildings and some which happen in the neighbourhood and beyond. So as we continue to discern the options for our buildings, may we do so knowing that it is in continuity with what the congregants of our past always intended - that we would provide a place where community connections could happen. As we continue to look toward the future, I invite you to pause in gratitude for the legacy we have received, for the courage of this congregation in naming such a hopeful vision, and for the future of sharing ahead of us.

## worship and music

**Sunday, Dec. 15:** We look at the stories of Ruth (Ruth 1:14-22) and Bathsheba (1 Kings 1:15-30) as a way to explore how Jesus "resets" how we view ethnicity, race and religion.

### 7:00 p.m. A Service of Carols and Readings

This service of readings, anthems and congregational carol singing is led by the Chancel and Youth Choirs.

**Sunday, Dec. 22:** As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, we explore the "annunciation" stories in both Luke (Luke 1:26-38) and in Matthew (Matthew 1:18-25). Following the service, there will be a rehearsal time from 12:00-3:00 pm in preparation for the family service on Christmas Eve.

### Wednesday, December 18th: 7:00 p.m. Longest Night Service

Hosted by Richmond Hill United Church and co-led with Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill Community Church and St. Matthew's United Church, this quiet and reflective service is for anyone who has experienced loss and finds this season difficult. There will be an opportunity to light a candle in memory of someone and to receive anointing. Refreshments will be served in Centennial Hall.

**Each Church season has a tone and rhythm.** Given this, an attempt is made to have similar elements throughout in order to tie it together. An example of this in Advent is having a wreath with a time for candle lighting at the beginning of each service. Another continuous element is the choice for the Prayer of Jesus. The version that has been chosen for this Advent is a translation based on the original Aramaic. The composition is based on Prayers of the Cosmos: Reflections on the Original Meaning of Jesus' Words by Neil Douglas-Klotz. The imagery of light and darkness in this particular version ties well with the growing darkness and hope for coming light that is so much a part of this time of year.

## programs for all

**Bible Study:** We will resume in January should there be interest. Please let James know if you want bible study to continue.

**Women's Spirituality:** We will gather **this Saturday the 14th** in the Chapel at 9:45 a.m. for our Christmas time together. The busy days of this season may be pressing on you so let us have some 'time out' and a joyous time together. Karen will begin our program with some thoughts on the song, "I heard the Bells on Christmas Day". Then we will each continue with our own Christmas Spiritual Pot Luck we've brought to share. Everyone bring some food to share! I'll put the coffee on. Hope you can come to wish each other a Merry Christmas.

**Men's Breakfast:** The next gathering will be on **Saturday, December 14th, 2019**. Coffee and tea will be served at 8:15am, followed by breakfast at 8:30 prepared by our UCW friends. New participants are always welcome. The Men's Breakfasts are a time of fellowship and camaraderie. Feel free to contact us if you're interested in more information about it. Cost is \$10 / person, with net proceeds to the UCW. Please RSVP to Harry Ramsaran (harrypersad.ramsaran@gmail.com or 905 508 4758) by Thurs., December 12th. Thank you! After breakfast you are invited to a presentation by Sandra Agayby. Sandra joined Mackenzie Health Foundation seven months ago as Community Giving Officer. As part of the Community Gifts team, Sandra actively engages with local businesses, community groups, foundations and individuals in Vaughan to encourage their support of Mackenzie Health and its vision of building and equipping Canada's first smart hospital.

**Shalom Seekers:** Shalom Seekers, will be taking a break for the holidays. We will reconvene on **Monday, January 6th from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.** in the Chapel. At that time we will start a discussion of the book "Everything Happens for a Reason (And Other Lies I've Loved)" by Kate Bowler. For that session, please read the Preface and Chapter One: Diagnosis. New members are always welcome. Please speak to Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton (Co-Facilitators) for more details. We hope you have a wonderful Advent and Christmas season. See you in the New Year!

**RHUC Book Club:** Please join us on **Wednesday, January 29th at 7 p.m.** in the RHUC Chapel to discuss two books: **The Story of Arthur Truluv** by Elizabeth Berg AND **Now That You Mention It** by Kristan Higgins. Both of these books are more light-hearted than the 'heavier' books we have been reading this fall. New members are welcome to join us at any time. No previous book club experience is necessary - just a love of reading and discussing books. We are a friendly bunch! For more details about the group, please speak to Deb Fratin in the church office (905.884.1301) or Sandra Loughton, Book Club Facilitator.

**H.A.I.R.:** (Heretics, Agnostics, Infidels and Other Riffraff) is the Monday evening study group where we gather to explore questions, express doubts, and realize that we are not the only ones who have wondered these things. We meet from 7 – 8:30 in the chapel. Please join us any Monday to explore your faith and its applicability to our lives, to ask the questions you may not have felt comfortable raising, and to learn with and from a stimulating group of fellow questioners.

**Faith Exploration:** Are you curious about Christian teaching? Do you want to know more about the beliefs and practices of The United Church of Canada? Are you thinking about being baptized or confirmed? Or perhaps you just want to explore your faith from an adult perspective? Then consider participating in Faith Exploration sessions. They are held on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month, beginning at about 12:15 pm. For more information, email James (james@rhuc.org).

## outreach activities

**Project 2020** is the name we are giving our ongoing collection for a youth-based climate action project. Advent envelopes will be in the pews on Dec. 15 and money collected will be added to our Lenten givings. We hope, through direct action, to challenge each family to reimagine how we live, work, travel and worship. Building on the incredible work Esther has done, connecting us with Draw down Richmond Hill and Neighbours of the Planet we are excited, as we should be in Advent, about the possibilities. Watch for details in January 2020!

Please remember Krasman backpacks will be collected through December with a special presentation under the trees on Dec 15. Also, sign up lists with Wendy to bring side dishes or to help with serving or cleaning up for our annual Krasman holiday turkey dinner at noon on Fri. Dec. 20.

**Krasman Centre Visitor "new Item" Holiday Donations**  
Once again at Advent, we are **collecting new backpacks and reusable bags filled with Wellness and Winter Need items for Krasman Centre drop-in Visitors**. The Richmond Hill Krasman Centre is located @ 10121 Yonge St. just 2 blocks south of the church. All donated items to be new. Loose items are welcome too, just put them in a reusable bag.

**On Sunday Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**, please place these items in the bushel baskets under the trees in the sanctuary. Krasman Centre needs these items by Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. During the weeks before Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> there will be bushel baskets in the office, if it is more convenient to drop off items there. Please note that 10% of K.C. visitors are homeless and approx. 2/3 of their visitors are men. There are women too, but not as many. Many Krasman Centre visitors "drop-in" because: they are interested in the programs offered, able to talk with peers (including staff) about their daily stresses, need an advocate to help with: navigating government assistance paperwork / housing / mental health & addiction issues; or just need a safe, supportive place to meet friends without being labelled or judged. It is a unique place "inspiring peer support one connection at a time". Let's help them feel "special" at this holiday time of year.

Here is a list of **special Wellness Items for K.C. Holiday Gift Bags**: notebooks & pens, word & number puzzle books, playing cards & fidget toys, travel-sized board games, art supplies, adult colouring books, pencil crayons / sharpeners, small change purses, gift cards to Tim Hortons or McDonalds in small denominations.

List of **K.C. Visitor frequently requested Winter Needs** (all new items): gloves, scarves, hats, hygiene items, non-perishable snacks (small, sealed, store bought like hot chocolate, tea, small treats, granola bars), backpacks, warm socks & underwear, sweaters & pants, Thermos & water bottles.

**Out of the Cold:** This is just a heads up for anyone who would like to help out on Mondays in February and March with making a dinner at St. Mary's Anglican for our Out of the Cold friends. We get together from 11:30 to 1:30 on four Mondays - two in February and two in March and make a home cooked winter dinner. It's fun for us and we know how appreciated it is by the diners! Let me or the office know if you would like to join us or help out in any way (cookies anyone?) Lyn May

**Gifts With Vision:** The United Church of Canada has released this year's gift catalogue, an alternative to the usual catalogues of "stuff"! Looking through, you can choose which project you would like to support in the name of someone on your Christmas shopping list. These projects have been verified and are monitored to ensure they are working towards people's wellbeing. The areas of support included are: Healing & Reconciliation, Leadership, Wellness, Safe Spaces, Education, Poverty and Hunger. Some are in Canada and some are global efforts; they support children and adults; and they range from \$10 to \$200 each. The projects speak to all this with the name **Gifts with Vision** - they offer immediate assistance working towards a vision of justice for all. Talk this over with the family and get children involved in knowing the great work they can help with. Copies of the catalogue are in RHUC office, at the Welcome table or go to [www.giftswithvision.ca](http://www.giftswithvision.ca) to see the projects - you can place your order and pay on line, making shopping easy. Give others and yourself the gifts of this Advent season: hope, peace, joy and love. Donna Smith 905-884-6307

**Minute for Mission:** In these times of change, people are asking, "What's happening with the Mission & Service of the church?" Our congregational and our Mission & Service revenues are both declining quite slowly at this point—two to three percent a year—so we have time to make changes, and we have time to do things differently.

The good news is that together we are making important changes, and we are taking the time to do things differently.

☑ We are restructuring the four courts of the church to three so that we live within our means. ☑ We are clarifying funding, so that assessments will be funding governance and shared services, and Mission & Service donations will be funding purely mission and ministry. ☑ We are continuing to keep decisions about the funding of local mission and ministry in local hands, so that regions will be deciding what mission and ministry will be funded in that region, and by that region. ☑ We are focusing on finding and trying out new models of being church by funding innovation in congregations through Mission & Service programs such as Embracing the Spirit, the New Ministries Fund, Edge, and the granting programs of The United Church of Canada Foundation. These changes will support the capacity for Mission & Service donations to continue to provide core funding to so much great work that's been going on across Canada and around the world.

## upcoming events



**Free Holiday High Tea Celebration:** for 2SLGBTQ+ and older adults and seniors. **Monday, December 16 from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.** in Centennial Hall at RHUC. Please advise of dietary diets. RSVP required: [rainbowspace@acyr.org](mailto:rainbowspace@acyr.org) or 416-938-4458

## church news

**Volunteer Counters Needed:** After service each Sunday, teams of 3 counters gather in the office to count, record and prepare the offering for deposit. We're looking for 3 volunteers to fill vacancies. The commitment is around 30 minutes every 5 weeks. Please speak to Dianne McLeod after the service if interested.

### Special occasions:

Rod, Kathy, David, and Diana McBey are thrilled to announce that Thomas McBey and Stephanie Lalonde were married on October 5th, 2019.

Thomas and Steph, both keen on summer and winter sports, first met in Kingston while Queen's Engineering students. Steph is from Dunrobin, near Ottawa. Their outdoor wedding took place in sunshine at Fields at West Lake, a barn event venue south of Belleville in Prince Edward County, followed by a honeymoon cruise. Thomas and Steph live in Mississauga near the Credit River.



**A MAP Minute:** As part of our MAP initiatives, we have formed a RHUC Concert Series Core team with the goal of developing a concert series in our sanctuary. We want to share this amazing space with the greater community of Richmond Hill.

This initiative was sparked by ideas shared in the Circle Process held in 2017-18, along with the Community Roundtable. Through these conversations, we discovered a need for another cultural event venue. This aligns with the MAP intent to create a “centre of community” that includes meeting, office and performance space at RHUC. In using our space in this way, we foster community among newcomers and established residents to meet, interact and learn from one another in a shared activity – the love of music!

The first concert series is an intercultural concert series focused on local performers from diverse backgrounds and neighbourhood caterers/restaurants. The hope is that this series will evolve to have other types of programming in addition to music concerts - spoken word, dance, cultural events, talks (like TedX Talks) broadcasted on social media/YouTube etc.

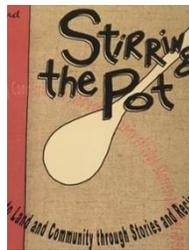
### Volunteers Required!

- Treasurer for Concert series (pay the bills/manage the budget)
- Marketing / Publicity (need a Strategist plus 2-3 people)
- Catering Liaison – work with caterers on needs/set up
- Volunteer Manager (manage volunteers and Front of House)
- Ticket Sales liaison (familiar with online tickets)
- Volunteers to sell tickets, manage the intermission appetizers/ coffee/tea, and Promote, Promote, Promote!

Next meeting: **Thurs. Dec. 19th at RHUC 7 pm**

RSVP to Nicole Moore (co-chair) at willowrose@pathcom.com or 905-508-5253. We need many hands if this series is going to be successful and be an alternative source of funds to keep the wonderful work of RHUC alive.

**For Sale:** We knew there were some of RHUC publication of *Stirring the Pot* left but there are many more that “some”. *Stirring the Pot* was a project we worked on in 2003, having gatherings in homes to share our family's stories about the connectedness to the land and the importance of food in building and sustaining community. Eighty members wrote their story about a favourite family recipe, which ancestor it came from and why it has remained significant in their lives. Many “tried and truly good” recipes! The cost of this book was \$20 and we sold many copies easily, covering the publishing costs and making a nice profit for our church. We would like to realize even more money for the church by selling more copies, now for a cost of \$8! Many people have joined our faith family since then and reading these stories will acquaint you with many people. The books are available from Deb in the church office during the week and after service on Sundays. A different and interesting Christmas gift to give. Donna Smith, 905-884-6307



We appreciate those who have passed in their pledge form and we would really appreciate receiving pledge forms from those who have not yet done so to the church office or in the offering plate by the end of December. The pledges are SO important to help with financial planning!

**Are you planning to move away?** Do you know of someone who is? Problem: the church finds out that someone attends RHUC has moved, often well after the fact! We feel badly that their life and contribution to our worship and work has not been recognized and our goodbye and best wishes have not been expressed. Please let me or Deb in the Church Office of any such moving plans. Thanks, Donna Smith, 905-884-6307

**Ladies - circle this date:** Friday, January 31 to Sunday, February 2, 2020 because that's the **Women's Winter Weekend**. More info will follow the beginning of January or phone Donna Smith, 905-884-6307.

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