

This week at a glance**Sunday, December 10 – 2nd Sunday of Advent**

9:00 a.m. Finance meeting – spare office
10:30 a.m. Service
12:00 p.m. Healing service
12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Common room
7:00 p.m. Carols by Candlelight

Monday, December 11

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

Tuesday, December 12

7:00 p.m. Beavers – gym
7:00 p.m. Tai Chi – Garden room

Wednesday, December 13

7:00 p.m. Scouts/Venturers – gym

Thursday, December 14

6:15 p.m. Bible Study - Chapel

Friday, December 15

9:15 a.m. Yoga Energetics – Upper gym
A perfect way to start your day! By meditation, strengthening muscles and increasing your flow of energy.

Saturday, December 16

3:30 p.m. Djembe drumming –Garden Room

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER**Worship****Sun., December 10th – Second Sunday in Advent.**

10:30 a.m. This coming Sunday we turn our attention to the beginning of Mark's gospel and the announcement by John the Baptizer that the Messiah is coming. In Mark 1:1-8, he invites us to repent, that is to turn our attention from whatever distracts us from God's realm of justice, peace and love. This "Preparing the Way" opens us to not simply welcome the Christ but to make room for him to be born in our lives. The following week we turn to Luke's gospel as we hear about the angel Gabriel coming to Mary (Luke 1:26-38). An All-Ages Worship, children and youth will remain in the Sanctuary throughout the service as we all participate in a fun exploration of culture and how we all have special ways to welcome Christ in this festive season.

12:00 p.m. Healing service.

7:00 p.m. Carols by Candlelight with the Chancel and Youth Choirs. There will be readings, and opportunities for congregational carol singing.

Sun., December 17th - Third Sunday in Advent

10:30 a.m. The previously lit Christmas trees are now fully decorated in this service for all ages. Nursery is still available. The third candle of the wreath is lit.

Sun., December 24th - Fourth Sunday in Advent

10:30 a.m. Our crèche is added as the final decorations in preparation for Christmas. The fourth Advent candle is lit as we anticipate the festivities to come.

Wednesday, December 20th

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, St. Matthew's United Church, and St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran 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.

Thursday, December 21st, 7:00 p.m.

Winter Solstice Service. We will gather in the chapel before moving outside to mark this darkest time of year by burning the Yule log and sharing our hopes for the coming year. Hosted by our in-house eco-spirituality group, Three Rivers Forest Church.

Children needed for play at 7:00 Christmas Eve service

Once again we are preparing for the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service. If you would like to be in the play, please confirm with Mom and/or Dad that you will be attending this service and then contact Donna DeVita in person, or at 905-884-0095 or at donnadev@devita.com. You may also speak to Rev. James.

Minister's Message

Each year on the Second Sunday of Advent, we recall the story of John the Baptizer as he announces the coming of the Messiah. Like Matthew and Luke, Mark quotes from Isaiah to describe John's prophetic ministry. In this we are reminded of the promise that God will fill valleys and level mountains in order to make a way in the wilderness for the people to come home from exile. That image reminds me of the importance of removing barriers as we strive to create a sense of homecoming for everyone in a congregation. At RHUC, that sense of home includes nurturing an environment where people from many cultures are included and so for a trial period we plan to offer printed copies of each week's bible reading in a variety of languages. Given that one's first language resonates in the heart and not just the mind, it is my hope that people being able to read along as the scripture is proclaimed aloud will help make the reading and sermon more meaningful for those who speak English as an additional language. I'm sure there are many more ways we can remove barriers and so create the sense of home that defines being part of a community. Together we create a path so everyone can find their way home.

Scripture readings – power of language

Have you ever thought about the power of the language you learned as a child compared to those you learned later in life. They speak at a heart level, something that is so important when it comes to the Bible. With this in mind, beginning in Advent, we plan to begin offering print versions of each week's scripture reading in languages other than English. If this is something you would appreciate, please let Deb or James know what language would be most meaningful for you and, if you know, what version of the Bible you prefer.

Would you like to be an usher?

The 2018 ushering schedule is in progress. If you are interested in more information on becoming an usher, please call the office at 905-884-1301 ext. 5.

Worship Matters

Here is another article in an on-going series -- keeping you up-to-date with Worship Committee plans, changes, and news. In response to the service on November 26th where we had 20 minutes of announcements, **the Worship Committee is changing the way we do announcements**. The cut-off for letting James know that you'd like to make an announcement on Sunday is Friday. It isn't really fair to him to come and ask at the last minute. If that happens, James may make the announcement for you, if there aren't already a lot of other people making announcements.

The main issue is the length of some of the announcements. We are going to try a new system and that is keeping announcements to a maximum of 50 words. Think of it as a creative challenge and a way to hone your writing skills!

Finally, with respect to making announcements, please ensure that you come up the stairs closest to the piano to make your announcement, and exit via the other stairs to allow for an easy flow of traffic. Thank you for your attention to these details. While we are all happy to be part of a vibrant church where a lot is happening, we have to try and keep our worship services to a reasonable length and part of that is making sure the announcements are succinct. Please speak to me or anyone from the Worship Committee if you have comments, questions or concerns.

(James, Barry, Anne Leyton-Brown, Anne Dunn, Craig Lee, Dawn Moon, Dominick Shelton, Harry Ramsaran, Joan Verner, Linda Clark, Sandra Loughton) *Sandra Loughton, Chair, Worship Committee*

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Minute for Mission
Called to be the Church

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the work of resolution in places of conflict. Let us hear a story from Palestine. In Bethlehem, the largely Christian-Palestinian city of Jesus' birth, Wi'am strives to build a just society through mediation, conflict resolution, and non-violence. Its premises are bordered on one side by Israel's controversial separation wall (deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2005) and on another side by a street that often sees confrontations between Palestinian protestors and Israeli soldiers. Rocks, tear gas canisters, rubber bullets, and live ammunition sometimes land in Wi'am's garden. "Simply being present here is an act of nonviolence," Programme Manager Imad Nassar says. Wi'am, a Mission & Service partner, works with all sectors of Palestinian society, Christian and Muslim, women and men, from schoolchildren to the elderly, addressing issues such as domestic violence, economic empowerment, peer relationships, and living under occupation. In its work with schools, Wi'am teaches children and young adults the skills they need to mediate conflict in non-violent ways and how to live and work in a society under the constant stresses of occupation. Since starting its workshops, there has been a significant decrease in violence in the schools it has been working in. Former students talk about how Wi'am changed their lives, gave them confidence, and put them in situations where they met Israeli students like them on neutral ground— often the first time they'd met Israelis who weren't soldiers. We sing thanksgiving for the conflict resolution and mediation of Wi'am supported through Mission & Service. 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!

Mask Sculpting Workshop



Sign up today!

Andrea Chan, a gifted local artist, is offering to teach a half day **Mask Sculpture workshop as a fundraiser for Stephen Lewis Foundation**. Possible date for this three hour workshop will be Sat Jan 27 or Sat Feb 3. Cost is \$80 and location is at RHUC in the old nursery, now called Common Room. Andrea requires a month lead in to prepare the base of the mask so we ask you to register your interest soon.

For pre-registration and more information, please speak to Linda Clark or Peg Hiscoke at our signup table after the service. A \$40 deposit is requested on registration.

This could be a special gift for someone in your family or for yourself. Join the fun and help make a difference for African AIDS families.

Gifts with Vision

We have received the new 2017-2018 alternative gift catalogue from the United Church of Canada. It contains the usual assortment of charities you can support through giving a donation in someone's name - a gift from you to help others, given in their name. Gift cards are available to let the person know you thought of them with this gift for others. Those especially hard to buy for or those who have everything might appreciate your desire to alleviate another's hardship here in Canada and around the world. Needs range from meeting an immediate need, like hunger and shelter; to tackling employment, like providing education or small business start-up money; to sending a kid to camp or buying basic school supplies. There are some catalogues on the welcome table but you can also do everything on the web: giftswithvision.ca This is the *alternative way of giving, and giving something that is really needed!* Contact: Donna Smith 905-884-6307

Winter coats needed for First Nations Teens!

Winter Coats urgently needed for First Nations Teens in the North!

HIP ('Honouring Indigenous Peoples') received a request from Andrée Cazabon (Director of the movie "Third World Canada") for winter coats and running shoes for 100 teens attending Thunder Bay's "Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School." (DFC). To attend the closest high school, these indigenous students must live away from home throughout their 4 high school years, and board in Thunder Bay. Unfortunately, there is no other high school in their 20+ remote, fly-in, First Nations communities. They come from the northwest quadrant of the province of Ontario, a catchment area larger than the size of some entire countries. There's lots of info online about DFC and the challenges faced by DFC students, eg. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/breaking-the-cycle-inside-a-high-school-that-is-reimagining-indigenous-education/article25146175/>



These high school students, ages 14 & up, miss their families and home communities, throughout their grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 high school years. They don't have money, and need new or gently used, adult sized (not child or youth sized, with a special need for some larger adult sizes too):

- winter coats (+ hats, mitts/gloves, scarves, snow pants, boots)
- backpacks
- running shoes & sports gear (eg soccer, baseball, skating, hockey or other)

Once generous donors provide these much-needed items, HIP will help ship them directly to the school, so the students receive warm coats early in January in the bitterly cold Winter Semester.

How you can help!

1. Donate a new, or gently used and clean, adult sized winter coat (has, mitts/gloves, scarves, boots, snow pants are also welcome!), backpack, running shoes or sports gear, during December!

Please drop off items (or donation cheques for which tax receipts are provided by HIP) at Richmond Hill United Church, 10,201 Yonge St (at Centre Street just north of Major Mackenzie Drive), Richmond Hill L4C 3B2. Please bring donated items to the church office for storage until shipment, or the Coffee Room behind the Office. [Church hours: Deb Fratin (905) 884-1301 ext 5 office@rhuc.org] Questions? Kathy & Rod McBey (647) 458-2717 kathryn.mcbeey@gmail.com

2. Make a financial donation!

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/HIP/campaign/coatdrive/>

All funds raised will go directly to purchasing and transporting donations to students of Dennis Franklin Cromarty School in Thunder Bay. HIP is a registered charity and tax receipts will be provided. No amount is too small and all donations are thankfully received! Cheques delivered to the church should be made payable to 'HIP'. Please on the cheque, (and on online donations @ "Include a Message for this Charity"), identify this special project, by noting "Winter Coats - DFC High School".

3. Spread the word!

Please forward and share this request with all of your contacts. Donations from friends, family, neighbours, coworkers, and email contacts, are all gratefully received and will be well used!

This is our chance to give important support to Ontario First Nations teens who truly need our help! ~

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH**Church Library**

If you have been using the lift or popping into the outer office for mail or as a shortcut to see Deb, you will have noticed that our library books have been relocated here from the chapel. We did this in order to make them more visible, an incentive to browse and hopefully borrow. We took advantage of this move to pare down our collection and so stay tuned for details regarding books, bibles and even older hymnbooks to given away.

Women's Spirituality

Women's Spirituality will gather **this Saturday, December 9th in the Garden Room.**

Program: "Live a Fuzzy Christmas Story":

1. We will begin arriving at our usual 9:45 but the program will *begin at 10:00*, not at 10:45.
2. Bring your warm housecoat to cuddle up in.
3. Refreshments and coffee/tea will be *served at 11:15*, as part of the program.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be on **Saturday, December 9, 2017**. Coffee and tea will be served at 8:15am, with breakfast in the gym at 8:30 prepared by our UCW friends. New participants are always welcome. The Men's Breakfasts are a time of fellowship and camaraderie. After breakfast, we will enjoy a talk by Greg McGovern, who spoke to our group a few years ago about his work at Metrolinx. This time he will share with us his thoughts about innovation, disruption and transformation in our societies. Greg will illustrate these general challenges with the advent (!) of automated / connected cars and smart cities in our lives. All are welcome!

Feel free to contact us if you're interested in more information about it. Cost is \$10 / person, with net proceeds to UCW. Please RSVP to Harry Ramsaran (hramsaran@rogers.com or 905 508 4758) by Thursday, December 7th. Thank you!

Looking ahead: Future dates for 2018 are January 14 and February 11.

RHUC Book Club

The book club will meet again in the New Year on **Wednesday, January 31st at 7 p.m. in the Chapel**. The book is to be announced near the end of December as we are planning to get a book club set of 15 books from the Markham Library which we can have out for six weeks. It will depend which of our choices are available at the time of pick-up. Sandra will pick up the books and let people know that they are available for pick-up at the church or will bring them on a Sunday for distribution.

H.A.I.R.

H.A.I.R. - We have finished our discussions of the McLaren book, and for the next two weeks we will be considering the philosophical and ethical implications of a pair of current issues. All are invited to join our discussions from 7:00-8:30 in the chapel.

December 11 - Sexual Harassment (triggered by the recent public attention to sexual misconduct in Hollywood and Washington, and the "me too" movement)

Special Occasions

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. Please let us know to add any special occasions that are coming up.

Congratulations to **Enid Mann** as she retires from Breakfast club Coordinator at Walter Scott P.S. after 18 years of volunteer work!

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY**Cash card order**

Thank you for your order! \$309 was earned this month!

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY**Donation of a wheel chair/transfer wheel chair**

A neighbour has offered a wheel chair and a transfer wheelchair which fits nicely in the trunk of a car to anyone who may need these items. She does not want to charge anything just wants to give them away. If you know of anyone who could use them please speak to Enid Mann at 905 884 8868.

Christmas concert

Enjoy beautiful selections of traditional Christmas songs, carols and sacred music. Join soprano Victoria Gydiv, pianist Karine Vasserman, violinist Oleksandra Fedyshyn and tenor Charles Di Raimondo to celebrate the upcoming holidays together with inspiring and uplifting music! When: December 16th, 2017 at 7pm-9pm
Where: Richmond Hill United Church Tickets: \$25 at www.maestromusic.org
Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1959381107657128/>

“Christmas with friends” concert by Ave Choir

Saturday, December 23, at 3:00 p.m. at Richmond Hill United Church. Tickets available at door or online at avechoir.com.

Living Presence Ministry

“The Frost is All Over” A Canadiana Folk Liturgy & House Concert for the Advent Season on **Sunday, December 17 @ 7:00 p.m.** at the Burrow, 1 Mondial Cres., East Gwillimbury. www.livingpresenceministry.org/frost.

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