

This week at a glance

Sunday, February 11 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany
10:30 a.m. Service – Sanctuary
12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Common Room
12:00 p.m. Potluck brunch for the LGBTQ2S community – Garden room

Monday, February 12
9:30 a.m. Shalom Seekers – Chapel
7:00 p.m. H.A.I.R. – Chapel
7:00 p.m. Cubs - gym

Tuesday, February 13 – Shrove Tuesday
4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Pancake supper – Centennial Hall
Gluten-free pancakes will be available plus Lyn May's wonderful crepes. Everyone is welcome.
7:00 p.m. Beavers – gym
7:00 p.m. Tai Chi – Garden room

Wednesday, February 14
7:00 p.m. Scouts/Venturers – gym

Thursday, February 15
5:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl Knitting – Chapel
6:15 p.m. Bible Study - Chapel
7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir – Common Room

Saturday, February 16
3:30 p.m. Djembe drumming –Garden Room

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

This Sunday: We mark Transfiguration Sunday as the Sundays after Epiphany draw to a close and we prepare to enter the Season of Lent. Our scripture reading is Mark 9:2-9, a passage about Jesus suddenly gleaming with light as he prayed on the mountain, that is sandwiched between his telling his disciples that he will soon suffer and die, and their arguing on the road about who is greatest. Jesus' transfiguration is not an end in itself but rather highlights the importance of letting go of personal glory in service to others. We will share communion.

February 11: We begin the Season of Lent, a time of self-reflection. We will begin this season with John 1:29-39, when a couple of John the Baptist's followers seek out Jesus and he invites them to "Come and see." This invitation to get to know Jesus will be the over-arching theme for the whole season. Part of this is an optional take-home activity where people can follow the itinerary of an imaginary pilgrimage throughout the Sundays of Lent, following a variety of prayer practices. As we did last year, people will have an opportunity to receive ashes in the form of a cross traced on their foreheads. This ancient sign of penitence and self-examination is completely optional.

Minister's Message

It seems like we just wrapped up Christmas and it's already nearly Lent. This year Lent begins on Valentine's Day. This strikes me as so appropriate. Lent is a time for us to ponder how we are doing in our relationships, to ponder how well we really love God, loving our neighbour, loving ourselves. We take time to pause and ask what attitudes, habits, biases are impeding our ability to live our relationships in a way that is respectful, faithful, nurturing. One of the relationships we forget to ponder is our relationship with the earth. Because we come from the earth, honouring it is one of the ways we love ourselves. It's one of the reasons we are marked with ash (we'll be doing this on Sunday, Feb. 18 rather than on Ash Wednesday, like we did last year). Ashes remind us of our mortality, and more than that, they remind us of our connection to the soil. Receiving ashes invites us to humility, to see ourselves as we are, with honesty, with patience, with acceptance, as well as with a desire to change and grow. If you happen to have palm fronds from previous years lying around the house, please bring them in so that they can be burned in preparation for the distribution of ashes. May this coming Lent be a time of honest self-examination and a deepening in all of our relationships.

Palm fronds needed

Time to bring in palm fronds: As Lent draws near, it is time to think about the distribution of ashes, which also means needing to prepare the ashes in the first place. So, please bring in your palm fronds from last year, or previous to that, so they can be burned and the ashes used as we begin Lent.

Adult Baptism /Membership

Do you want to learn more about the teachings of Jesus and what it means to be Christian? Are you interested in becoming a member of Richmond Hill United Church? Are you seeking to grow spiritually? Are you looking to share your beliefs with a supportive group of friends? Then consider joining a series of teaching sessions this coming February and March (even longer depending on the needs of the group). **We will hold our first meeting on February 18 after worship.** See James for more information.

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY

Tour of RHUC

RHUC has gathered at the corner of Yonge & Centre Streets for worship, concerts, events, food and fellowship since our 1880 building was constructed. There is lots of history that has happened which will be shared, along with a tour of even the "hidden" places, after the service on **Sunday February 25th. Gather in the sanctuary right after you pick up a coffee/tea; I will aim to be finished at 1:00.** *Donna Smith, 905-884-6307*

Nominating Committee

**Do you have gifts that you wish to share with our community of faith?
Interested in learning more about how you can contribute to the mission of our church?**

We have several specific volunteer opportunities in our congregation:

- Welcome Leadership – Providing leadership for the team that helps connect the newest people in our congregation to all of our activities
- Council Secretary – Keeping the records of our monthly Council meeting
- Work Party Organization – Supporting our Property Committee by organizing our volunteer work parties
- Mission & Service Enthusiast – Our congregational champion for promoting the activities supported by the M&S Fund, and stewarding our congregational contributions

You may also have skills that could be contributed to any of our Standing Committees:

- Christian Development – Participating in the work of programs and activities offered to children, youth and adults which nurture and encourage faith exploration and formation
- Fellowship – Participating in the work of events and activities to sustain and develop fellowship within the congregation
- Finance – Participating in the work of overseeing financial expenditures and coordination of budgeting
- Lay Pastoral Visitors – Participating in the work of our program of lay pastoral visitation
- Ministry & Personnel – Participating in the work of overseeing relationships within the pastoral charge ministry, particularly the roles and functions of paid leaders and employees
- Outreach and Social Action – Participating in the work of fostering understanding and action concerning the church's mission in our local community, our country, and our world
- Property – Participating in the work of supervising, maintaining, and improving all church property
- Stewardship (Generous Spirit) – Participating in the work of encouraging the congregation's stewardship of time, talents and treasure
- Welcome – Participating in the work of welcoming new people into our church
- Worship – Participating in the work of overseeing the worship life of the congregation

Come share with our Nominating Committee in discerning if any of these roles might be for you. The Committee members are Nancy Hart (Chair), Donna DeVita, Heather Moon, Brandon Moore, James Ravenscroft, and Donna Smith.

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

50 – 60's Sock Hop!

Stephen Lewis Fundraiser

50's-60's SOCK HOP on SATURDAY FEB 24 from 5:30 – 9:00 p.m.!

Hands and Hearts for Africa warmly invite you to our Fabulous February Sock Hop. Coming soon on Saturday Feb 24 from 5:30 -9pm in the lower gym.

Brush off your dancing shoes and join us for a fun evening of delicious pasta, live music and silent auction. Be sure to wear your craziest socks for the Crazy Sock Prize and bring your friends and family. Tickets cost \$20 Senior/ Student, \$25 adult, \$55 per family of 4. Tickets are on sale today after the service or call Deb at the church office. Come join us at the Hop and support the Stephen Lewis Foundation!

Ground breaking News: Did you know the Stephen Lewis Foundation is doing ground breaking work with African AIDS families in Sub-Saharan Africa? Why ground breaking? Because the Foundation supports and mentors community-based programmes for the long term and consults with the families and grannies directly. Ground breaking because the Foundation has developed an assessment tool to measure the impact of community-based programmes on Quality of Life- something never done before re AIDS but soon to be used by UNAIDS, the Global Fund and on the agenda for the World AIDS conference next year!

Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Our gifts for Mission & Service create safe spaces where people can come together as family. Bissell Centre in Edmonton is one of these places. The stories in today's Minute for Mission were first shared on its blog. Bissell Centre offers people living on the margins food, shelter, and a feeling of belonging. Most people who visit the centre can immediately tell that the people there have a special bond with one another. Diane, a long-time volunteer, describes the connection she feels. "When I don't come, I miss the people in the Drop-in Centre. They're always stopping us and talking to us," she says. "It's like a family." The phrase "like a family" is often used by staff, volunteers, and especially the participants themselves. Here are some of the ways Bissell Centre has shaped people's sense of family. Kayla shared that "Bissell Centre has given us a sense of belonging, tradition, and foundation to start from. The staff has encouraged us to grow and always gives us something to look forward to." Judy says, "I don't know what I would have done without all of the staff at Bissell Centre. Look! Now I am sitting in my own home. I consider all of the staff to be my family." The community at Bissell Centre has grown and changed for over 100 years, thanks in part to the support you have provided through Mission & Service.

Out of the Cold

We have the dates and menus set for this year at St. Mary's Anglican on Mondays. We will be preparing 4 dinners:

- Jan. 29 - Shepherd's Pie
- Feb. 12 - Beef stew
- Feb. 26 - Chicken Quesadillas
- March 26 - Roast chicken.

In case you are interested and/or available, we get together from 1 to 4 in the kitchen at St. Mary's Anglican Church and prep the main, veggies and salad. It's lots of fun and not usually much later than 3:30. If anyone would like to contribute salad materials that would be great. I make the dressing but always need greens etc. Just bring them directly to St. Mary's the day of. We aren't responsible for desserts this year as they usually get lots of contributions but homemade cookies and bars are always welcome for snacks and bag lunches. Just bring them to the RHUC kitchen large fridge labelled in a disposable container. I can't promise to get people's family heirloom cookie tins back to them. **If you would like to serve or help in other ways from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 29, Feb. 12th, Feb. 26 or March 26, give your name to me and I'll pass it along.** Thanks for your help in past years and looking forward to working together again this year. *Lyn May, Chair of Outreach*

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

Women's Spirituality

On **Saturday February 10th** we will be gathering at 9:45 for refreshments and visiting and the program will begin at 10:15 to learn more about interesting women of the Bible. Hope to see you Saturday!

Opportunities for youth/young adults

Opportunities for youth/young adults:

- Living Waters Presbytery is seeking four young people to fill the positions of Camp Counselors for Camp Awesome. Application deadline is now Feb. 13! More information: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/928324dba8f52b79a022086b9/files/21c2a0ff-fdb5-46c7-8f52-4a1f231c3073/Youth_Job_Opportunity_bulletin_insert_2018_002_.pdf
- The United Church has been invited to recruit one individual -- hopefully a young adult -- to participate in the 2018 Korea Peace Treaty Seminar organized by the National Council of Churches in Korea. <http://www.united-church.ca/opportunities/national-council-churches-korea-peace-treaty-seminar>

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be on **Saturday, February 10, 2018**. 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. 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 (hramsaran@rogers.com or 905 508 4758) by Thursday, February 8. Thank you!

Looking ahead: Future dates for 2018 are March 10, April 14, and May 12

"After breakfast, all are invited to a presentation and discussion by Dr. D.J. McCready. DJ has been at RHUC since 2011. He is a Professor Emeritus in economics at Wilfrid Laurier University where he taught for 40 years. He has published many articles and books in Economics and some in Political Science for his interests lie in Public Finance and Health and more specifically in policy issues. You may remember he spoke a few years ago on his research in Kenya and Rwanda. He has turned his attention to economic justice, and one of the huge issues from a policy perspective is the growing income inequality which now becomes the topic of his talk.

Bible Study

No need to have been before. Come once. Or every week. Or drop in every so often. We will look at the reading for the upcoming Sunday, in this case Mark 9:2-9. See you in the chapel!

Shalom Seekers

Please join us on **Monday, February 12th from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Chapel**. We will be continuing our look at 500 years since the Protestant Reformation through the DVD "This Changed Everything". Specifically, we'll be looking at: Sacraments, Salvation, Scripture & Tradition, War & Pacifism.

Please speak to Dawn Moon, Peg Hiscoke, or Sandra Loughton for more details about the group. New members are welcome at any time!

H.A.I.R.

Each Monday evening from 7:00 - 8:30 pm, RHUC's evening discussion group gathers in the chapel. We are going to be viewing 'The Challenge of Paul' for the next 3 weeks, Jan. 29, Feb. 5 and Feb. 12. Featuring renowned historical Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan, this video series explores the world of Paul's time and place. Crossan pushes past generations of doctrine and dogma to reveal the real-life character of Paul who shaped a generation of courageous Christ-followers to boldly challenge the greed and violence of the Roman Empire.

UCW

Hold the date for the **UCW Spring Luncheon on Saturday, April 21 at 1:00 p.m.**

RHUC Book Club

Please join us on **Wednesday, February 28th at 7 p.m. in the Chapel** as we discuss the novel "**The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper**" by Phaedra Patrick.

"Phaedra Patrick understands the soul. Eccentric, charming, and wise, **The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper** is about finding courage, generosity, and compassion, even when all seems lost. With clear-eyed prose and a moving story, Patrick reminds us how selfless people can be; she reminds us to be brave."

New members are welcome to check out the group at any time. No previous book club experience is necessary! Please speak to Sandra Loughton for more information.

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.

Happy Birthday to **Viola Butler** as she celebrates her 102nd birthday on February 14th!

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

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 on **Thursday, February 15, 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 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. Last year we had 8 people gathered and a couple people made them at home. Patterns and some yarn are available.

Skylight Festival

Until February 15th, you can register for the early bird rate of \$149. That includes a whole weekend of amazing speakers, musicians, artists and workshops - at a savings of \$50!

Register here: <https://fiveoaks.secure.retreat.guru/program/skylight-festival-2018/>

And keep checking (our soon to be brand new!) website for updates on contributors and sponsors. Skylightfestival.ca

GROUNDING: ECOLOGY, FAITH. HOPE

GROUNDING: ECOLOGY, FAITH. HOPE (May 25-26, 2018) is a unique event being sponsored by Bracebridge United Church. Through expert speakers, artwork, workshops, music, and worship we'll explore hopeful ways to respond to the ecological crisis as people of faith. This will be a companion event to the 2018 Muskoka Summit on the Environment which will take place May 24-25 at the Bracebridge Sportsplex. The Summit brings together speakers from the world of environmental science. This year's theme, *Restoring Our Relationship with the Natural World*, is a great fit for those of us who belong to a faith tradition. To learn more, and to REGISTER go to: www.grounding.ca

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