

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

Sunday, February 12th – Guest drummer Larry Graves

The scriptures for this week are: Matthew 5:21-37 and 1 Corinthians 3:1-9. Next week's passages are: Matthew 5:38-48 and 1 Corinthians 3:18-23. The focus of my message this week is: Sometimes listed as "The antitheses", the series of sayings from Jesus "you heard it said... but I say to you..." are less about Jesus' offering a contrasting law but rather drawing us back to the spiritual root of the law. He invites us to consider not just our actions but the places in us from which our actions come, challenging us to look within.

Sunday, February 19th – Baptism

12:00 p.m. Lunch & Learn

Sunday, February 26th – Scouting Sunday

12:00 p.m. Annual Congregational Meeting

Minister's Message

Last week I shared about "The service of the word". Today I want to look at one portion of that service, namely the time of silent reflection that I like to include before I share the message. This practice is inspired by an experience that Glen and I had at a service in Manchester. I was expecting a sermon following the readings of the day but instead there was a lengthy time of silent reflection, a good ten minutes. Following this the minister offered her message. I was taken aback at first but the longer we sat in silence the richer it became, a time for each of us to ponder the readings we had just heard. The minister's message seemed to flow out of this shared time. One of the gifts of it for me was that it solved a custom that I was uncomfortable with, namely there being a spoken prayer before the message. For me that prayer seemed to imply that the sermon (message) was distinct from the readings rather than an extension of them, as if the reflections of the minister were set apart. For me the silence honoured that the Spirit was speaking a word to each of us. It took a bit for people to get used to when I introduced it, but over time the silence became a meaningful part of the service.

Old Palms and New Ashes

In a few weeks it will be Lent once more, a time of spiritual reflection and preparation for Easter. A traditional way to begin Lent is to have the cross traced on your forehead with ashes. These ashes are created by burning the palm branches from last year, both what we keep here at the church and what people bring home. Should you have palm branches from previous years, we invite you to bring them in to the church so they can be burned in preparation for Lent. While ashes are generally received on Ash Wednesday, this year we have decided to integrate this practice into the First Sunday of Lent (March 5).

Youth Confirmation

Youth Confirmation (Reaffirmation of Faith): This coming Lent and Easter, we will be having preparation sessions for youth to reaffirm their baptismal faith (be confirmed). We will meet on Sundays after youth choir for about 90 minutes. Please bring your lunch. We will have an information session on March 5 and then begin formally after March Break. Let James know if you are interested.

Scripture readers

If you would like to participate in the worship service as a scripture reader, please contact Joan Verner at joanverner@rogers.com.

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

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.

Bible Study

Thursday Bible Study: Beginning **Thursday, January 19th**, James will be facilitating a Thursday evening bible study sessions from **6:30 – 7:30 PM**. We will meet in “**The Meeting Room**” (not sure what else to call Linda’s office). 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.

Men’s Breakfast

The Richmond Hill United Church next Men’s Breakfast will be on **Saturday, February 11, 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. 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 905 508 4758) by Thursday, February 9th. Thank you!

After breakfast, our guest speaker Barry Rieder will share his experience with us on his role and work at The Jane-Finch Community Ministry. Barry is originally from Calgary, Alberta but has lived in Toronto now for the last 30 years. He has a Social Work degree from the University of Calgary and a Master of Theological Studies from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Although his formal training is in social work and theology, much of his learning and education has come from various communities and organizations that he has worked with over the years. He has been a children’s counsellor in the Battered Women’s movement, a youth literacy worker with the Downtown Church Worker’s Association, a community youth worker at Davenport Perth Community Health Centre, a community development worker for an inter-faith coalition in Lawrence Heights and a program consultant with the Addiction Research Foundation. For the last 22 years he has been working for The United Church of Canada as a Community Minister in the culturally diverse, low income community of Toronto called Jane and Finch. In Jane and Finch there is representation of over 100 ethno-cultural groups speaking 72 different languages and dialects. The Ministry office is situated in a small public housing community called Firgrove and Barry’s role has been to provide community development support, pastoral care and advocacy through coalitions and networks. In 2006 Barry received an award at City hall for Outstanding Achievement in the area of Social Justice and in Oct. 2009 he received an honorary Doctorate Degree for his work in the Community.

H.A.I.R.

HAIR, the Monday evening study group, will be beginning a GREAT new book on **January 30th**. 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.

February 13 - Chapter 2b: What’s Incompatible? (31 pp.)

February 20 - Family Day (no session)

February 27 - Chapter 3a: Why Accommodationism Fails? (26 pp.)

March 6 - Chapter 3b: Why Accommodationism Fails? (26 pp.)

March 13 - March Break (no session)

March 20 - Chapter 4a: Faith Strikes Back (33 pp.)

March 27 - Chapter 4b: Faith Strikes Back (39 pp.)

April 3 - Chapter 5: Why Does It Matter? (39 pp.)

Shalom Seekers

Please join us in the Chapel on **Monday, February 13 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.** for a lively and thought-provoking discussion. We are beginning to look at a new book: **Christianity for the Rest of Us - How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith** by Diana Butler Bass. The reading for the upcoming session is the Introduction and Chapter 1: The Vanished Village.

For more details, please call the church office (905-884-1301) or speak to one of the group’s facilitators -- Dawn Moon, Peg, Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton. New members are warmly welcomed!

Women’s Spirituality

Women’s Spirituality will gather **this Saturday the 11th** at 9:45 for coffee and conversation in the Garden room with the program beginning at 10:15. All women are welcome!

RHUC Book Club

Please join us on **Wednesday, February 22 at 7 p.m.** to discuss Thomas King's *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. This work of non-fiction was a 2015 selection for CBC's Canada Reads competition. "Every Canadian should read Thomas King's new book. . . It's funny, it's readable, and it makes you think. If you have any kind of a social conscience, The Inconvenient Indian will also make you angry." ~ Toronto Star

We have obtained a book club set of ten books from the Aurora Library and those have been distributed to book club members already. Both the Richmond Hill and Aurora libraries have copies of this book, or you could check with someone in the group and borrow a book set copy. Members of the congregation are more than welcome to join us for this meeting. For more information, please speak to Sandra Loughton or Lyn May.

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 **March 1 from 7:00 – 8:00 in the Chapel**.

BUILDING FOR MINISTER

Cash cards

Thank you to the monthly supporters of our on-going RHUC fundraiser – Cash cards. **This past order earned \$185!** Please consider supporting this fundraiser by buying cash cards for your monthly groceries or gas purchases! If you would like more information, please speak with Janet Centa or Deb Fratin.

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Out of the Cold 2017 – help needed!

Out of the Cold starts at the end of January on Monday nights at St. Mary's Anglican church. Our church is providing 4 dinners - Feb 6 and 13, and March 6 and 27th. I will be looking for dessert contributions - Feb 6 fruit crisps, Feb 13 carrot cake, March 6 gingerbread and applesauce and March 27 TBA. Of course, homemade cookies and squares are always welcome, any time for snacks and bag lunches. It's easiest if you bring things in disposable containers, and leave them in the big glass frig at church. I check regularly and freeze whatever needs to be kept. I will be available after church for sign up or you can let me know via email or phone. If you are interested in volunteering in other ways, just let me know and I'll find a spot for you! Thanks for your help in the past, and anything you can do this year. Lyn May, Outreach Chair

Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Hope for Syrian Refugees: Our gifts for Mission & Service support refugees. Let us hear a story of hope from a refugee camp in Jordan. As a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, millions of refugees have fled to neighbouring Jordan and Lebanon. In both countries, as well as Syria, ACT Alliance is responding to needs like food security, water, sanitation, education, and psychosocial issues. Zaatari Refugee Camp in northern Jordan is home to 80,000 Syrian refugees. ACT Alliance members are using educational programs geared for teenagers and young adults to give these refugees hope and provide them with the skills they'll need to rebuild Syria when the war is over. One 23-year-old refugee who has participated in three programs— computer skills, life skills, and youth initiatives—wants to use what he's learned in the camp to build a new Syria without violence or terrorism. Other courses offered include non-violent communication and conflict resolution, English language skills, and hairdressing. Some refugees' lives are completely changed in Zaatari. One man, Mohammad Allo, arrived in the camp scared, single, and unemployed. Now he works for ACT Alliance member the Lutheran World Federation as a psychosocial facilitator, got married in the camp, and has a second child on the way. "We are not terrorists, as the stereotype goes. We don't want to be stereotypes," he says. We sing thanksgiving for the hope carried in the resilient lives of refugees. 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!

Sock Hop!



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25th from 5:30pm-9:30pm

COME JOIN US AT THE HOP--our special fundraiser for Stephen Lewis Foundation! We promise a wonderful evening of pasta dinner, silent auction and live 50s-60 music. Get ready to have a hopping good time in the lower gym, as we welcome back the live music of Little Peter and the Elegants from 7pm-9pm. To add to the fun, we will be inviting our guests to wear their craziest pair of socks for **THE GREAT SOCK CHALLENGE**.

Prizes will be awarded for the funniest pairs. There will also be a table quiz called the Feelin' Groovy Trivia challenge. Tickets are on sale now after the service and throughout February at a cost of \$25 single and \$45 per family. Tickets are also available at the church office during the week at 905-884-1301 Ext 5. We hope to see you there to help us make a difference for Africa's AIDs families. (This event is hosted by Hands and Hearts for Africa)

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

Youth Opportunity

We have been given tickets for the "We Can Change the World Day 3" which takes place on Sunday, February 12th, 2017 (1:00 to 4:30pm) at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. These are for youth 14 - 20. If you are interested, please contact the church office at: 905-884-1301. (Tickets are limited) Thank you to the "Connecting the Community" community for this generous donation.

Quilting group

Our next sew day will be **Saturday February 11th from 12:30 to 3:00** in the Garden room. Sewers and non-sewers alike are welcome. There is always a job for everyone. Feel free to bring along your lunch and tea will be available.

Research on Indigenous issues in Canada

Kiara Fabbro is planning on researching the congregation's education on Indigenous issues in Canada. This involves when they were learned, where, what was learned, and what impact that may have on the level of involvement and interest in these issues. This study is focusing on the differences between generations and she is asking anyone interested to participate, children who may have started learning about this in class are also welcome to participate. There is a Letter of Invitation posted on RHUC's website.

Please read the Letter of Invitation before you respond to the survey

[Letter of invitation](#)

Follow this link to the Survey:

[Take the survey](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

https://qtrial2017q1az1.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_baqpgc23D7ZJM45&RID=MLRP_88rXE03FEHa2oeh&Q_CHL=email

Blog post

Finding the Divine ~ RHUC'S Seventh Annual Women's Spirituality

Retreat <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/08/finding-the-divine-rhucs-seventh-annual-womens-spirituality-retreat/>

Food blog by Glen Warren

Want a recipe? On occasion you have had a chance to taste some of Glen's sweet treats after worship. If you'd like the recipes, check out his food blog: www.gutfounded.com.

Prayers at Imam Mahdi Islamic Centre

Friday, February 10 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Imam Mahdi Islamic Centre, 7340 Bayview Ave., Thornhill, ON. Tel: 416-762-+8200/Email: info@ImamMahdi.ca

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