

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

Sunday, February 26th – Scouting Sunday. Message: “Light for the Journey” by James Ravenscroft. Scripture Readings: Exodus 24:12-18 and Matthew 17:1-9. Next week’s reading is Matthew 4:1-11.
12:00 p.m. Annual Congregational Meeting

Mar. 5th First Sunday in Lent

10:30 a.m. We receive ashes as a sign we have begun a time of reflection and prayer. We snuff out our first candle as we journey with Jesus.
12:00 Healing Service

This year the focus of our **Lenten givings** will be **Doctors Without Borders or MSF Canada**. This excellent group of dedicated health professionals and volunteers spreads their efforts around the world through 70 active projects. Current highlights (or lowlights) are work with displaced people in the Syria/Lebanon/Jordan area, work in Northern Nigeria (the site of a recent bombing of a refugee camp) and helping in South Sudan where there is widespread famine. As our Advent givings supported the Toronto Native Women’s Centre (over \$2000) we traditionally shift our support to a global project during Lent. We count on your support. Specially marked envelopes will be in the pews on three Sundays - March 5, 19 and 26.

Mar. 12th through April 2nd

10:30 a.m. Each Sunday of Lent we extinguish another candle in our mutual walk with Christ.

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

As the worship service ends we pray a blessing prayer and then we are commissioned. This part of the service is like our gospel reading this week. As the Sundays of Epiphany end and we get ready for Lent we celebrate Transfiguration Sunday. On this day we reflect on the experience of Jesus and three of his disciples. While in prayer on the mountain, Jesus is transfigured before them and Elijah and Moses appear with him. Peter volunteers to build three shelters for them. Like him it is tempting for us to want to hold on to spiritual moments like a worship service, but like the disciples who follow Jesus back down the mountain we too need to return to our Monday to Saturday lives. Blessed we go into the world to be the hands and feet of Christ.

The meaning of ashes: This year on the First Sunday in Lent, everyone will be given the opportunity to have ashes imposed on their foreheads. This way of beginning Lent extends back to the first centuries of the Christian church. Ashes were seen as a sign of grief and repentance. We hear reference to this in the Book of Jonah when the Ninevites began a fast out of sorrow for their sins. Ashes also remind us of the earth, a symbol of our mortality. We have a small cross traced on our foreheads with ash in recognition that we are entering a time of self-reflection and prayer.

World Day of Prayer @ RHUC

Richmond Hill United Church is hosting World Day of Prayer 2017 on **Saturday March 4th at 2:00 pm**. The service is written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of The Philippines and is adapted for use in Canada by the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada. The Theme is “Am I Being Unfair to You?”. Everyone is welcome. For more information please call June Blanchette 905 780 0048.

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

Women's Spirituality

Women's Spirituality will gather **this Saturday February 25th in the Garden Room at 9:45 for coffee**. Program: We are not alone, even in our sad times.

Men's Breakfast

Richmond Hill United Church next Men's Breakfast will be on **Saturday, March 4th 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 March 2nd.

After breakfast all are invited to the church parlor for a presentation by our guest speaker Gillian Hards. Gillian is the Cultural Services Coordinator for the Town of Richmond Hill. Gillian will introduce us to Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan, the plan's goals, and some of the exciting activities, projects, and initiatives that are underway to guide cultural development in Richmond Hill.

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 2, 9, 16, 23, 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.

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!

RHUC Book Club

Please join us on **Wednesday, March 22 at 7 p.m. in the Chapel** to discuss **Under the Visible Life** by Kim Echlin. "Under the Visible Life takes readers from the bustling harbour of Karachi to the palpable political tension on the streets of 1970s Montreal to the smoky jazz clubs of New York City. Deeply affecting, vividly rendered, and sweeping in scope, it is also an exploration of the hearts of two unforgettable women: a meditation on how hope can remain alive in the darkest of times when we have someone with whom to share our burdens."

New members are always welcome to try us out. We are a friendly group and have wonderful, lively discussions. For more information, speak to Sandra Loughton or call the Church Office at 905.884.1301.

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.

During the month of March, **James will be hosting an open house on Mondays from 1 to 4 pm in his office**. Pop in for a coffee and tea.

United Church Women

UCW will meet on **Wednesday, March 1 at 9:30 in the Parlour** – "Danny Boy" that haunting Irish ballad that everyone loves! What do you know about the mystery myth? Lynne Saul will attempt to unravel this for us. Come and join us for our St. Patrick's Day program with tea, Irish refreshments and conversation. See you there!

Bible Study

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.

Shalom Seekers

Join us on **Monday, February 27 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Chapel** to discuss "**Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith**" by Diana Butler Bass. The reading for that session will be Chapter 2 (Remembering Christianity) and Chapter 3 (The New Village Church).

For more information about this study group, please speak to Dawn Moon, Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton, or call the church office at 905.884.1301.

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 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.)

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 7 from 7:00 – 8:00 in the Chapel**.

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY

General Council Remits Process

Context: The General Council #42 met in Cornerbrook in August 2015 and approved a number of changes within the United Church. In order to bring these changes into effect, Pastoral Charges and Presbyteries are required to vote on a series of Remits.

8 Remits are required to be approved by a majority of governing bodies. Non-response is assumed to be a negative vote.

In broad strokes, RHUC Council, as the governing body, is responsible for making the decisions on the Remits and agreed that we would start the process of approval in September 2016 and each month one Remit has been reviewed and discussed. Council will vote on the Remits at a meeting following the AGM.

We invite you to review the attached material which provides a summary of the Remits. Hard copies of this material will be available at the AGM. We will be engaging the congregation in Table Groups at the AGM to provide the opportunity to answer questions and receive input.

We encourage you to look at www.GC42.ca where a great deal of material is available to elaborate on the proposed changes.

Cash Cards – RHUC Fundraiser!

If you would like to put an order in for the Cash card RHUC Fundraiser, please have your order in by Monday, February 26. Thank you!

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*

Our gifts for Mission & Service support global partnership and theological engagement. Let us hear the story of the United Church delegation to the church in China. We give thanks that The United Church of Canada answered an invitation from Mission & Service partner The China Christian Council to witness together and accompany one another in God's mission. The group of 22 United Church people from across Canada saw first-hand the experience of the Chinese church. Moderator Jordan Cantwell led the delegation. "This visit opens a window for deepened church-to-church engagement and presents an opportunity for the United Church to understand China through encounters with Chinese Christians," she said. The visit also recognized the existing partnership between our churches, building on a long history of mission and ministry together in China. It was another step in continuing our faithful journeys toward unity, justice, and peace. Delegates saw the blessings of the church in China and the challenges it is addressing. They shared from their unique perspective the challenges and opportunities of the United Church. "We return with the friendship and blessing of the Chinese church and a deepened commitment to sharing God's great works in our diverse and varied Canadian contexts," said participant Betsy Anderson. We sing thanksgiving that Mission & Service helps build relationship and partnership for God's mission of justice and peace. 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! - This Saturday Feb. 25th!



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. There are a few tickets available at the door: \$25 single and \$45 per family/\$15 dance. 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

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

Quilting group

The **RHUC Quilters** will meet on **Saturday March 11th** in the Garden Room at 12:30. We will continue to work on our village quilt top. No quilting experience is necessary. If you like working with fabrics or fun colour matching, join us. All are welcome to bring a bagged lunch and tea will be available.

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/>

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