



**We will continue to livestream Sunday service using Zoom.**

Details regarding how to connect to this platform will be emailed each week to those on our contact list. If you are not on our contact list and would like these details, contact James (james@rhuc.org). Following the online service, a recording of the full service will be posted on our Facebook page. Follow this link: [facebook.com/RichmondHillUnitedChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/RichmondHillUnitedChurch/). In addition, the weekly message will be posted on the [RHUC Blog](#).

If you ever find you're encountering issues using Zoom on Sunday, you can always visit <https://status.zoom.us/> to check the site status. To access the home based worship resource so you can use to follow along or take time for personal reflection, follow this link: [Order of service](#) [Hymns](#)

We understand that this is a strange time, but we will get through it together. We are still one community, committed to care for one another with compassion and love.

**Minister's Message:** Who would have thought that we would be on the threshold of Lent already? But here we are with Ash Wednesday in only a few days. For many people, Lent is a special time. Even in a pandemic, it is an opportunity for reflection and prayer, self-examination and spiritual renewal. For some it is a time to "give up something" and for others to add something. I often combine them, cutting back on one thing, like watching TV, to take on another, say spiritual reading. Given that we are still in lockdown and even when it is lifted, we will need to avoid going out, this Lent could be a good time for quiet and self-reflection.

A meaningful practice for many people is to fast. Fasting is not just going hungry. In our physical hunger we discover our spiritual hunger as well. And yet we don't stay spiritually hungry for long. I find that my empty stomach leads me to a fuller heart. Fasting can be an act of solidarity with people who may not have enough to eat, who are housing insecure, who are struggling in any number of ways. We also become more aware of how we often eat without thinking, inviting a greater degree of mindfulness. I find this aspect of slowing down to think about my practice to be very helpful. With these points in mind, I would like to share a "fasting practice" tied to caring for creation.

The link to "A Fast for the Earth" was sent to me by a friend from St. Mary's Anglican Church. It proposes a different type of fast for each week of Lent - fasting from meat, needless consumption, food waste, water, injustice, electricity, and ignorance. You can find the resource here: <http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/creationcare.>

We often fast and take on other spiritual practices as individuals, but we can also do them as groups. One practice we may want to consider is taking a "meeting Sabbath" for Lent. Congregations who do this encourage committees and other groups to not meet during Lent or, if they do, to be less business focused and instead to make the gathering a time to pray together and build community. This idea could be a great benefit this year with meetings over the last eleven months having shifted online. Zoom has been a great help, but it is not a substitute for meeting face to face. It is tiring in large part because we're trying to read body language and facial cues but are hindered from doing so. Interactions often don't feel as spontaneous, especially when one of the people you see is yourself (we should all turn off self-view more). A break from Zoom meetings, or at least to structure them differently, might do a world of good.

Lent is a time to do things differently, to take stock, to simplify our practice. In some ways the past eleven months have been like that, but we were thrown into it against our will. As we begin Lent, let's be intentional about taking stock and doing things differently. And we will come to Easter feeling renewed

## worship and music

[Order of service](#) [Hymns](#) [Discovery Time at home](#)

James' video to children: [https://1drv.ms/v/s!A1BjmozEVDROgaNbDaApHvP\\_w-SA3Q](https://1drv.ms/v/s!A1BjmozEVDROgaNbDaApHvP_w-SA3Q)

**Sunday, February 14:** We mark the last Sunday before Lent with a reflection on Mark's version of the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2-9) when Jesus brings Peter, James and John with him when he goes up a mountain to pray. We also reflect on excerpts from *ministry with the Forgotten* by Kenneth Carder. Ian Wilgus will be our guest preacher. We also share communion virtually, so please have bread and grape juice (or wine) on hand to share at home.

**Wednesday, February 17:** We begin the Season of Lent with a virtual gathering for **Ash Wednesday**. As part of the service, we will ponder what we need to let go of in our lives in order for us to grow. We will gather via Zoom at 7:15 pm. Contact Deb for the link.

**Sunday, February 21:** We celebrate the First Sunday in Lent, reflecting on John 15:9-17, as Jesus reflect on the significance in laying down one's life for others, and 1 Peter 3:18-22 in which the author reflects on the spiritual meaning of Jesus' death. During Lent, we begin with reflective reading as a way to centre ourselves for worship.

**Sunday, February 28:** We celebrate the Second Sunday in Lent as we reflect together on John 2:13-22 when Jesus drives the moneychangers out of the Temple and 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 in which the author reflects on the apparent foolishness of the cross.

**Worship Notes:** We share in virtual communion this Sunday. For this, participants need to have bread and juice/wine (or other suitable food and drink) ready before the service begins. We eat the bread and drink the juice/wine from our remote locations at the same time as the worship leader. We are able to do this in the United Church based on our Methodist and Presbyterian heritage regarding communion which places the focus on the gathered community in celebrating sacraments rather than on the presiding minister. The minister needs to lead the celebration because they represent the congregation's connection to the wider church. As a denomination interpret "gathered community" broadly to include being together through computers and other devices. We share communion in real time.



**Sunday offering:** RHUC, like other churches, depends on donations and rentals to pay our bills. We appreciate those who use Pre-Authorized

Remittance (PAR). For those not PAR, please consider making sure you get your weekly envelope money in (mailed in or mail slot on Centre. St. door) and we hope as well that you will consider some extra to compensate for the loss in income. You can use e-transfer to [office@rhuc.org](mailto:office@rhuc.org), Canada Helps, <http://www.rhuc.org/donate.html>, or post-dated cheques to the Church, 10201 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, L4C 3B2.

## programs for all

**Women's Spirituality:** Will gather this **Saturday, Feb. 13th at 10:00 on Zoom** to discuss friendship. Please have at your computer the following: piece of white paper, 8 1/2 x 11, or thereabouts, scissors, red marker, pen, pencil crayon, crayon, any combination or just 1 (to rest your concern, no creativity will be required). All women are welcome. Contact Donna Smith, 905-884-6307 for the Zoom link.

**Shalom Seekers:** We will not be meeting on Zoom on Family Day, Monday February 15. We will resume our gatherings on Zoom on **Monday February 22nd at 10 am** with a new Lenten study called "Lifting up Scripture through Art". Each week we will focus on certain scripture readings for Lent and we will explore how art in its many forms enhances our understanding. There will be an opportunity to be creative ourselves as well. Resources for reflection are sent to participants before the meetings. For more information, please contact Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton.

**Prayer Shawl knitting and crocheting** will continue during Lent this year, but we cannot meet at the church with Covid-19. We will meet on Zoom and visit that way while we work on our Prayer Shawl on **Wednesday's, February 17 through to March 31 from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.** We have given out many of those made during Lent last year to those who are grieving the death of a loved one or those who are baptized or join our congregation or to those people who move to another community. They are a way of showing people they are being thought of during a time of sadness or celebration. Yarn, needles and hooks are available. Phone Donna Smith, 905-884-6307 for information, and to get the Zoom link.



**RHUC Book Club:** Please join us on **Wednesday, February 24th at 4 p.m.** on Zoom or by telephone to discuss the novel The Home for Unwanted Girls by

Canadian writer, Joanna Goodman. This is a heart-wrenching, gripping story of a mother-daughter bond that could not be broken and it was inspired by true events.

On **Wednesday, March 24th** please join us again on Zoom at 4 p.m. to discuss Recipe for a Perfect Wife by Karma Brown. Brown's novel is set in two different time periods -- the 1950's and in modern day. A new homeowner finds notes left in the basement in cookbooks from the previous owner of the house. A somewhat dark and mysterious, but very readable tale! For more information about the RHUC Book Club, please speak to Sandra Loughton, Facilitator. New members are always welcome.

**HAIR:** HAIR (Heretics, Agnostics, Infidels and Other Riffraff), is on **Monday evenings at 7:00 pm over Zoom**. This group intends to be a place of inquiry and questioning, where doubts are expressed, uncertainties about our faith and its relevance to our daily lives clarified, and the application of the teachings and principles of our Christian faith to major issues of our time are explored, and where we have interesting and stimulating discussions. This year we are using videos of TED talks to launch discussion and have dealt with such topics as environmentalism and climate change, racism and social justice, ethics and values, science and religion, and healthy ageing. These discussions are open to anyone interested, and new members are always welcome. To get the Zoom link please contact David Leyton-Brown at [dlbrown@yorku.ca](mailto:dlbrown@yorku.ca).

**Lenten Book Study: February 18:** "negro frolics (january)" and "zero tolerance (february) in *The Skin We're In (TSWI)*, and Chapter 1, "The Beginning" in *21 Things (21)*

**Two opportunities for Centering Prayer:** This Zoom-based group will meet **Mondays at 12:30** for a simple format with a 20-minute silent sit. **Wednesdays at 6:30 pm** is a reflective format with readings, Taizé style refrains as well as a discussion time after the 20-minute sit. Contact James (james@rhuc.org) for Zoom links to both prayer times

**Pub Theology: Friday, February 26 at 7:30 PM on Zoom:** It is time to come together again to talk about faith, spirituality and life's big questions, all over the beverage of your choice. Let James know if you would like to participate and he will send you the Zoom link. Feel free to invite a friend.

## church news

### Congregational Update – Save the dates!

**AGM Postponement:** Our originally planned date for our AGM was Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup>. In these extraordinary times, the Sub-Executive of General Council of the United Church of Canada has agreed that congregations can defer annual meetings until the end of June 2021. After some discussion at the Board, it was decided that we would re-schedule our AGM to **Sunday May 2nd, 2021** (time to be confirmed) and for it to be part of our Anniversary celebration and reflection. Hosting an AGM on Zoom with up to 100 people takes a considerable amount of preparation in addition to considering participation of those who are unable to connect online. The extra time to prepare is helpful and we will also hope to have a better sense of some budget uncertainties related to federal government support by that time.

**Annual Reports:** We are also trying something different with our Annual Reports this year. The Board felt we can take the opportunity to really reflect on all that we have been doing this past year and frame it in the context of our 9 intentions from our Mission Action Plan that was approved by the congregation in April 2018. More information on this next week in RHUC Reflections!

### **2020 Financial Position/ Building Development**

**Update/AV Project update:** We are planning a Zoom congregational update on our 2020 Financial Statement and an update on the work we have been doing with SHS consulting this past year on **Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 2021**. Time to be confirmed. Please save the date and the link will be sent out. The 2020 Financial statement will be part of our overall annual report that is brought to the AGM on May 1<sup>st</sup>, but we thought the congregation would appreciate an earlier presentation.

**2021 Budget:** The board approved a draft 2021 budget at the January 13<sup>th</sup> 2021 board meeting as is our normal custom. The final 2021 budget will be brought to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on **Sunday May 2, 2021**. Materials for the AGM will be available to the congregation 3 weeks in advance.

**Leadership and Congregational Development Forum – April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (on Zoom):** Please save the date for this upcoming forum. Time to be confirmed. More details to follow.

**Thank you!** My sincere thanks for the tribute you gave me on Sunday, Jan. 24 on the occasion of my 65 years as member of the Chancel Choir. I have been blessed to be able to do that and will always be grateful! Thank you so much, love Bill Lekx



**Generous Spirit: A GREAT BIG THANK YOU!!!!** The Generous Spirit Stewardship group would like to thank all of you who have

submitted your 2021 Pledge Forms! It makes such a difference for the Financial planning for the year. However, it is not too late to submit your form if you haven't had a chance to! If you wish to have an electronic copy of the pledge form, please contact Deb Fratin in our church office office@rhuc.org . Paper copies of the pledge form will be available in the church office when lockdown is lifted. Completed forms may be mailed to the church as well. If you need a paper copy of the form brought to your home, or you have a completed Pledge Form that you would like to be picked up from your home, please email nancy.hart@outlook.com or leave a message at 416.420.3406 Many thanks.

**A Word from the Nominations Committee:** It is that time of year when we recruit people for roles on the Church Board, and our various committees and teams. Our Nominations Committee is discerning how best to fill present and upcoming vacancies. You are invited to ponder where you may feel called to share your gifts at RHUC. The Nominations Committee is looking to fill the following roles:

**1. Vice-Chair of the Church Board:** This person assists the chair of the church board in their role, chairing meetings as requested. This person also assists the lead of the Volunteer Animation Team in the Nominations process. The Vice-Chair succeeds the Chair of the Church Board at the end of their term.

**2. Forum Facilitators:** Worship, Music & Spiritual Formation, and Mission, Outreach & Social Action: Forum Facilitators may seem like a new role at RHUC, but they are based on the model used by Outreach. In addition to convening a gathering of committees and groups to see what projects they have planned and to look at new possibilities for the coming year, the Chair of Outreach is part of the Board, bringing a social/ecological perspective to its work.

The overall ministry of RHUC is divided into three areas:

**A. Worship, Music & Spiritual Formation; B. Mission, Outreach & Social Action; and C. Leadership & Congregational**

**Development.** Based on the above, the responsibilities of Forum Facilitators are to:

- sit on the Board to bring the perspective of their ascribed area of church life to its work and to relay any concerns the various groups within that grouping may have;
- convene, twice a year, meetings with members of associated committees, teams, groups, and other interested people, to discuss goals, projects and events that contribute to our ministry;
- invite the committees and groups that are part of their area of church life to discern what their upcoming needs might be and to submit budgets to the Finance Committee.

**We are looking for Forum Facilitators for Worship, Music & Spiritual Formation:**

**A. Worship, Music & Spiritual Formation**

- Sunday Morning Worship and Music
  - worship committee
  - ushers and greeters
  - sound system and technology team
  - sanctuary decoration
  - choirs and djembe drummers
- Christian Development
  - Family Ministry (children & youth)
  - Adult Study Groups (Shalom Seekers, HAIR, Book Club, Faith Exploration)
- Spirituality and Wellness
  - Women's Spirituality
  - Meditation
  - Forest Church

If you have questions about the above positions or need help in your own discernment regarding where you may want to share your gifts at RHUC, the members of the Nominations Committee are happy to assist you. Simply contact one of the following committee members: Kathleen Crosbie (kltcrosbie 'at' gmail.com); Donna Harrison (donna115 'at' sympatico.ca) Donna Smith (donnasmith44 'at' rogers.com); and Doug Loweth (loweth 'at' sympatico.ca)

## outreach

**Green Minute Information:** There is a very current and evidence-based discussion on the best way forward in the climate crisis in this episode of Quirks and Quarks (CBC): <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/jan-30-new-climate-war-tactics-lizard-burrows-are-wildlife-condos-sleep-lunacy-and-more-1.5889807/prominent-climatologist-behind-hockey-stick-graph-talks-about-the-new-climate-war-1.5889809> Climate scientist Michael Mann spoke with Bob McDonald about his new book, [The New Climate War](#), and what he thinks we need to do to preserve our planet:

- governmental policies that individuals like you and I can't pass on our own.
  - incentives, massive incentives, for renewable energy
  - a price on carbon which Canada has
- climate deniers are not the big issue anymore, it is the climate disruptors - people trying to divide, and despair-monger. Despair is an issue because:
  - It is not true, the science indicates if we reduce our carbon emissions dramatically, we **can** avert the worst impacts of climate change
  - And despair keeps us inactive.
- We need to inform the persuadable middle of the population.

I am pleased about this because this is the goal of the Target Climate initiatives begun here in Richmond Hill United Church, to bring communities together to network and plan actions and advocacy. My Grade 8 class is hosting a **Target Climate - Willowdale** event on March 4th from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.:

- contact [targetclimatechange@gmail.com](mailto:targetclimatechange@gmail.com) if you want to attend

The youth climate movement has been a game changer and taught us that it's about ethics, our obligation not to degrade or destroy this planet for future generations. Let's keep up our efforts to talk and advocate for environmental issues. Please contact me (Esther Collier, Chair, Net Zero Committee) at [a.collier@sympatico.ca](mailto:a.collier@sympatico.ca) if you want to chat.'

**Out of the Cold:** RHUC has a long connection with the homeless in our community having supported the Out of the Cold program since the beginning in 2005 and more recently our partnership with the Krasman Centre. Go to [cnoy.org/richmondhill](http://cnoy.org/richmondhill) to donate and learn more. If you would like to support one of the teams, we suggest "Connecting the Community" another organization we support, or to our area's organizer "Mosaic". Your donation is most important to assist people in need of shelter overnight.

## community news

**Rainbow Space events for February 2021:**

<https://mailchi.mp/2886ca416f5a/ixdtvcnzpc-5394710>

Where to find out which York Region grocery stores post COVID-19 cases:

<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10319836-where-to-find-out-which-york-region-grocery-stores-post-covid-19-cases/>

To unsubscribe, please write to: office@rhuc.org , and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Published by Deb Fratin. Please submit notices by noon on Wednesday.