



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: Each year, Lent is a golden opportunity for each of us to take time for self-reflection and prayer. We do this in preparation for the Easter season, in large part because at Easter many denominations either celebrate baptisms, especially of adults, or include a renewal of baptismal promises. And so, as part of Lent, we consider how we are doing as disciples of Christ, especially where our growing edges may be. While we rightly focus our attention on how we are doing as individuals, the baptismal connection to these weeks of reflection reminds me that we also should include how we are doing communally.

With this in mind, I intend to spend some time over these weeks to reflect on how we are doing as a community of faith, and I invite you to do the same. The lens I intend to use is the Mission Action Plan that we agreed to implement in April 2018. The culmination of over a year of deep conversations and discernment, we laid out for ourselves a set of goals that would define our future direction. Being a "Centre for Community and the Arts" is a big part of that direction, but it is part of a broader vision in which we said that we want to "radically create a sense of belonging"; "reach out to our neighbourhood"; and "redesign and upgrade our buildings, finances and structures to reflect our vision/mission. Further to this we set out nine intentions to flesh out that work, namely to:

1. be a culture of welcome, respect and safety where we honour one another and respect diversity
2. engage with the community in our neighbourhood
3. ensure our facilities align with our values, identity and purpose
4. develop intentional opportunities for people to gather to build relationships, nourish spiritual wellness and engage in justice
5. create dynamic, engaging and meaningful worship
6. reach out with care to people at all stages of life
7. communicate our story both within and beyond the congregation
8. be good stewards of our finances and our facilities
9. and foster and value leaders and volunteers.

As I shared in my reflection for the Ash Wednesday service, our Lenten pondering is based on where we are called to grow. And so, we created a kind of "compost" to nurture us in that process. Well compost is just another word for *humus*. Another word connected to *humus* is humility. Part of being humble is being honest, which means we need to look at our strengths and not just weaknesses, or in the context of our MAP, to lift up where we have succeeded along with naming what we haven't accomplished yet.

So, stay tuned through these weeks as I consider how well we are rooting, where we are seeing some growth in our plan, where perhaps we need some composting. And I invite you to do the same. In fact, feel free to let me know how well you feel we are doing. I will begin by looking at the first intention – creating a culture of welcome, respect and safety. Until next week, happy pondering.

worship and music

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. This week we reflect on part of a sermon preached by the Re. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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

James' video to children: <https://1drv.ms/v/s!AIBjmozEVDROgaQfh9gJy6uCJRdQ3w>

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.

Sunday, March 7: For this Third Sunday in Lent, we reflect on John 3:14-21, known mostly for one verse, John 3:16, and Ephesians 2:1-10.

Worship Notes: Lent is a special time of year, marked by many with a greater focus on prayer and reflection. With this in mind, the worship services throughout Lent will begin with a time of reflective reading, often called *lectio divina*. Meaning "divine reading", this is a style of prayer where you read a passage slowly, open to words and phrases that seem to grab your attention. Rather than looking at what the whole reading is about, the practice is based on the belief that a small part of the larger text may hold meaning for each person, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or if you prefer, through the whisper of one's intuition. One word or phrase in a passage will speak to one person while another portion which grab someone else's attention completely. When that happens, stop, ponder that word, that group of words. Ask yourself "what is it about that word or phrase that has meaning?" "Why is that?" When you feel ready, read more of the passage, again stopping when a word or phrases seems to jump out at you. In the context of the worship service, the passage will be read aloud along with the written text, there will be a time of silence followed by a second reading and additional time to ponder.

Learn about Birding with Three Rivers Forest Church: Each February, the activity for Three Rivers Forest Church is an opportunity to learn something about nature. This year we have the opportunity to learn about birds and the hobby of birding. We will gather on **Zoom at 3:00 pm, Sunday February 28.**



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, 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

Shalom Seekers: On **Monday February 22nd at 10 am** we will start 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 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 **Wed., 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.

Lenten Book Study: February 25: "justice for abdirahman (march)" and "direct action (april)" in *TSWI*, and Chapter 2, "Resistance is Futile" in *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

SAVE THE DATES

March 7, 2021 (time to be confirmed) – Congregational Update (on Zoom)

- 2020 Financial Statement
- Progress re work with SHS Consulting re-development of Village Commons (former CD Building)
- AV Project

April 11, 2021 Leadership and Congregational

Development Forum (on Zoom Time to be confirmed. More details to follow.)

Sunday May 2nd, 2021 - Annual General Meeting (on Zoom)

- time to be confirmed

MISSION ACTION PLAN Minute

Annual Reports: We are also trying something different with our Annual Reports for an unforgettable 2020 that has pushed us in all sorts of new directions.

The Board felt we can take the opportunity to really reflect on how we have adapted our life as a faith community 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.

This means we are inviting all committees/groups who normally submit reports to consider their collective work this year and [pick one or more of the nine intentions to answer the following question:](#)

In 2020, how have we (committee, group etc.) contributed to RHUC meet our commitments to:

1. Be a culture of welcome, respect and safety where we honour one another and respect diversity
2. Engage with the community in our neighbourhood
3. Ensure our facilities align with our values, identity and purpose
4. Develop intentional opportunities for people to gather to build relationships, nourish spiritual wellness and engage in justice
5. Create dynamic, engaging and meaningful worship
6. Reach out with care to people at all stages of life
7. Communicate our story both within and beyond the congregation
8. Be good stewards of our finances and facilities

The reports do not have to be long. We are trying to get a sense of our collective efforts and how they are contributing to the goals we set for ourselves as part of the Mission Action Plan. The pandemic has changed many things, but also created opportunities for new ways of being church. We think there is a great story to tell!

NEW OPPORTUNITY: We are also extending an opportunity to anyone in the congregation to reflect on what you or your family has been doing this year that could fit into our MAP intentions. Or, if you have experienced something as a result of people part of this community or been impacted by someone in our congregation. Our faith and being part of RHUC informs our day-to-day lives, not just what we do as part of RHUC. We encourage you to think of a couple of sentences that help tell the story of anything you would like to share that speaks to one of the 9 intentions above.

Please forward reports and other contributions to office@rhuc.org by March 19th, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Jane Wedlock at jane.wedlock2@gmail.com



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
2. Forum Facilitators for Worship, Music & Spiritual Formation
3. Chair of the Family Ministry Committee
4. Members of the Finance Committee

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

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 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.

lifting our spirits

This is a section for poems, reflections, recipes, uplifting news items, anything to help us get through this, and to do it together. Please submit items to help us all "lift our spirits". Email Deb at office@rhuc.org.

LOCKDOWN - a poem by Brother Richard Hendrick (Neighbours in a New Way)

Yes, there is fear.
 Yes, there is isolation.
 Yes, there is panic buying.
 Yes, there is sickness.
 Yes, there is even death.
 But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise.
 You can hear the birds again.
 They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
 The sky is no longer thick with fumes
 But blue and grey and clear.
 They say that in the streets of Assisi
 People are singing to each other

Across the empty squares,
 Keeping their windows open
 So that those who are alone
 May hear the sounds of family around them.
 They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
 Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
 Today a young woman I know
 Is busy spreading fliers with her number
 Through the neighbourhood
 So that the elders may have someone to call on.
 Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, and Temples
 Are preparing to welcome
 And shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.
 All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.
 All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.
 All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
 To how really big we are,
 To how little control we really have,
 To what really matters,
 To love,
 So we pray and we remember that
 Yes, there is fear.
 But there does not have to be hate.
 Yes, there is isolation.
 But there does not have to be loneliness.
 Yes, there is panic buying.
 But there does not have to be meanness.
 Yes, there is sickness.
 But there does not have to be disease of the soul.
 Yes, there is even death.
 But there can always be a rebirth of love.
 Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
 Today, breathe.
 Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
 The birds are singing again,
 The sky is clearing,
 Spring is coming,
 And we are always encompassed by Love.
 Open the windows of your soul
 And though you may not be able
 To touch across the empty square,
 Sing.

community news

Rainbow Space events for February 2021:

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

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.