



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](#)

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: When I awoke on January 1, 2021, I felt a sense of relief, a feeling that we had finally made it and 2020 was behind us. I realize that my relief was symbolic. The same issues we faced the evening before - an ongoing pandemic, economic struggle brought on by lockdown restrictions, political division south of the border, our own tensions on this side of it - were still present. But there was also hope - people were being vaccinated, the state legislatures had confirmed the electoral college votes and the inauguration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris was on the horizon, there was a sense of genuine commitment to tackling racial inequality in the US and a growing solidarity in Canada in support of Indigenous rights and addressing racial inequality here as well.

But then on January 6, Epiphany, when we remember how magi came to honour Jesus, I watched with alarm as the US Capitol Building was stormed by a gang of Trump supporters, not just attempting to disrupt the counting of the electoral college votes but overturn the results of the US election. And it goes without saying that most of the mob that overran the Capitol precinct were not wearing masks, making what happened a super-spreader event on top of being a coup attempt.

The storming of the US Capitol was a sober reminder that the sense of promise I felt on January 1 will not come without ongoing effort. CNN Commentator Van Jones expressed my fears well when he wondered aloud whether the events were "the death throes of something ugly...or... the birth pains of a worse disorder?" They will only be the former if people continue to work together to tackle ongoing division and injustice on both sides of our border, especially given that we are all too well aware that things would have been very different if the "protestors" were Black and not predominately white. The presence of Confederate flags and claims of fighting for "their America" were a stark reminder of what the protestors are really concerned about. I am sure that it was lost on them that they were such a clear picture of white privilege on a day when traditionally we celebrate the symbolism of the magi as a coming together of the nations and a healing of divisions in Christ. I am sad that so many of these same "protestors" claim to be his followers.

In the end, I can only trust that our American siblings will weather this storm and we will join them in the struggle for a more just, loving and peaceful world. I offer the following prayer composed by our Moderator, Rev. Richard Bott, along with Adele Halliday, the United Church's Anti-racism and Equity Officer, and Rev. Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator for Worship, Music and Spirituality:

As we follow our newsfeeds,
and observe with horror
what is happening in the capital of the United States of America,
we call on you, Creator of All Love.

We painfully remember peaceful protests of tangible and documented injustices,
 led by Black and Indigenous peoples
 who were sadly met with undue hostility and violence,
 and characterized as rioters,
 in contrast to how the violent clashes incited by Trump supporters
 on baseless claims is being responded to
 and reported on.
 We pray for those who are most acutely experiencing the terror
 caused by these actions,
 and those who deeply understand the hatred and racism that
 such acts fuel.
 We call on you, Prince of Peace,
 and pray for your wisdom, your guidance, and your love,
 that those who are rioting would leave Washington,
 so that elected decision-makers can go back
 to their chambers,
 to the lawful work that they have been given
 by the people of the United States.
 We pray, with all that we are,
 loving God.
 Amen.

Thankfully, those officials were able to conclude their important work. Now it is incumbent on all of us to advocate for the just and equal world glimpsed as wise ones from another nation, culture and religion honoured Jesus' birth, a world that he grew up to make his primary mission. It is our mission as well.

worship and music

Discovery Time at home

James' video to children:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AlBjmozEVDROgaEy7KGzbFQAQTF2Fw>

Sunday, January 10: We shift from Christmas into the Sundays after Epiphany, recalling how Jesus began his adult ministry by being baptized in the Jordan River by John. Of particular note is how he is proclaimed God's beloved son, a reality that James will reflect on in regard to not only Jesus but all of us in "Believing You're Beloved". We also reflect on an excerpt from *A Testament of Devotion* by early 20th century Quaker Thomas Raymond Kelly. As we recall what it meant for Jesus to be proclaimed beloved, we prayerfully pause to reclaim what that means for each of us, especially through our own baptism.

Sunday, January 17: We now turn our attention to Jesus' years of ministry as we recall how he called his first disciples. We most often associate this with Jesus calling Simon, Andrew, James and John but in John 1:43-51 the focus is on Philip and Nathaniel instead.

Sunday, January 24: Jesus once again calls disciples. In Mark 1:14-20 we hear the more familiar calling of the four fishers, Simon, Andrew, James and John.

Sunday, January 31: We mark another Ember Day and take time to focus on the gift of creation. We welcome Martin Bush to speak about tackling the climate crisis.

Worship Notes: Prayers and bible readings can become very familiar. This is a source of comfort and yet over time we stoop hearing them as they were first written. This is especially true of a prayer as familiar as the Prayer of Jesus (the Lord's Prayer). To help us hear this important prayer with fresh ears, it is our custom to use alternate translations and paraphrases. The version that we will use for the next few weeks is written by David Sorrell, associated with Rex A. Hunt's progressive Christian community in Australia. Given everything that is going on, the version's focus on peace and justice is both timely and poignant.



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

HAIR: Our Monday-evening study group, HAIR (Heretics, Agnostics, Infidels and Other Riffraff), will resume **on Monday January 11 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. Monday's discussion will be based on a TED talk by Celeste Headlee entitled "10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation". 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.

Women's Spirituality: Their first gathering of 2021 will be this **Saturday, January 9th at 10:00 till 12:00 via Zoom**. The program theme is "Unveiling", led by Donna Smith. If you would like to join us, please contact Donna, 905-884-6307, for the Zoom link.

Shalom Seekers: Join Shalom Seekers via Zoom **on Monday, January 11 at 10 am**. We are reading Chapter 9 of Barbara Brown Taylor's book "Holy Envy", in which she focussed on Being BORN AGAIN. Newcomers are very welcome. Please speak to Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton for more details.

Three Rivers Forest Church: This month's Forest Church event on **Sunday, January 24 at 3 p.m.** will be similar to the Winter Solstice celebration in that it will be a combination of individual practice and a Zoom-based group gathering. Participants are asked to take some time to go for a meditative walk and to gather found natural objects that they can then use to create an image that reminds them of the sun, late January being the time when we begin to notice how the days are in fact getting longer. This time of year is also associated with creativity. Participants are asked to take a picture of their creation so that they may share it with the group. Please contact James (james@rhuc.org) for the Zoom link as well as for additional information.



RHUC Book Club: Please join us on **Wednesday, January 27th at 4 p.m.** via Zoom for our meeting to discuss the novel **American Dirt** by Jeanine Cummins.

American Dirt "is one of the most important books for our times. Already being hailed as a 'Grapes of Wrath' for our times and a new American classic". This gripping novel tells the story of a woman and her young son trying to escape the vicious drug cartels in Mexico as they attempt to flee to safety.

New members are always welcome to join the group. Please speak to Sandra Loughton for more information about the book club.

Two opportunities for Centering Prayer: Beginning next week, we are adding a second opportunity for Centering Prayer. This Zoom-based group will meet **Mondays at 12:30** for a simple format with 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.

church news

RHUC conversation: Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in on **Thursday, January 14th at 7pm on Zoom**. Zoom Link will follow in the new year. The Board recognizes that it would be helpful to have a more interactive session with members of the congregation to chat about a number of topics in preparation for our AGM in March. Topics for discussion include: Governance, Communication, the AV system and the AGM itself. There are likely other topics. It may be that we need an additional session before the AGM.

Dorothy Low: Dorothy was interviewed by Maclean's magazine on December 18, 2020 about 'Why I'm spending the holidays alone'

<https://www.macleans.ca/society/why-im-spending-the-holidays-alone/#gallery/alone-for-the-holidays/slide-3>

Craig Lee: On Dec. 31, 2020, Craig was interviewed for the Richmond Hill Liberal about his surviving the month-long quarantine in Japan from a COVID-19 outbreak while on a cruise ship. Craig says he is looking forward to travelling but probably not a cruise ship right away.

MAP Minute: We may be in the middle of a pandemic but that hasn't stopped the work of implementing Mission Action Plan. One key part of our plan is finding ways to communicate who we are to the wider community. In today's world a website is a big part of doing that. To that end, the Communications Team has been looking beyond our "repaired" website to having a new website developed. Given budget constraints, the Team has opted to engage recent website development grads who will use our website as part of their portfolio. As part of this task, the Team has looked at the values and intentions named in our 2018 MAP as the source for a colour palette as well as possible tag line and logo. Please contact James if you have any questions about this project.

More opportunities to connect online: As we once again spend more time in our homes, it is important that we don't isolate ourselves. With this in mind, we are considering offering a weekly evening gathering on Zoom like we did last Spring. This would be an opportunity to check in with friends as well as a chance to stay up to date with what is happening at the church. We are also exploring other ways to gather, perhaps for games, for prayer, to discuss the sermon. If any of these possibilities interest you, email James (james@rhuc.org).

lifting our spirits

As we once again endure another period of lockdown, we will once again have a section of "RHUC Reflections" focused on keeping everyone's spirits up. 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.

A beautiful music video:

<https://webmail.bellhosting.ca/api/bf/attachments/?folder=RHUC%20Reflections&uid=353&part=2&action=download&name=VID-20201223-WA0000.mp4>

2021 Looks A Lot Like 2020 - The Cottage:

<https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/2021-looks-a-lot-like-2020>

Poem: Dearly Beloved,
Grace and Peace to you. *Just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.*
—Mark 1.10

Underwater it's quiet.
Deep in God you hear your heart beat
and the Great Silence of the universe.

Only when you come up
do you hear the roar of the world.
Bring the silence with you.

God's waters break,
the heavens' womb opens
and you emerge into a wound

torn more than the waters.
Only the divine silence
overcomes the world's noise.

The Spirit, dove of listening,
descends, and bears you gently
through this torn, raging world.

"The realm of heaven has suffered violence,"
Jesus says, "and the violent take it by force."
But they needn't storm the ramparts

of God's heart torn open,
where we already are.
Life is both an emerging and an entering,

a birthing, from love, into love,
a binding of the wound.
Bring the silence with you.
Deep Blessings, Steve



Homemade sauce for burgers:

Makes ¾ cup
Prep time: 5 minutes
6 tbsp ketchup
6 tbsp mayo
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
2 or 3 medium garlic
cloves minced
6 tsp finely chopped dill
pickles or sweet pickles
(optional)

In a small bowl, whisk together the ketchup, mayo, Dijon mustard, garlic and pickles (if using) until combined. The sauce will have a slightly thin, spreadable consistency.

Storage: Store leftover sauce in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 4 days.

outreach

Out of the Cold: Mark **Saturday February 20th** on your calendar and join us in a virtual walk for Out-of-the-Cold's annual fundraiser walk. This year it will probably be held virtually, and more details will follow. We will need a team name to register so send your suggestion to Donna Smith, donnasmith44@rogers.com. Hopefully this event will help connect us when we can't gather at our church but also support this very worthy cause.

community news

From Daisy Wai: 'Please be invited to an event I am organizing for the community in January 2021.

- **Monday Matters -- a Richmond Hill Community Gathering Event -- on January 11th** at 7:30pm to 8:30pm

Please join us as we bring the community together. The event will last for an hour.' Register: daisy.wai@pc.ola.org

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.