

Circles Process – Menu of Options Update

A big **THANK YOU** for all those who were able to stay after worship on Sunday to complete the Menu of Options Survey. We appreciate the time that you spent and believe it is very important as we move forward in this work. Some people took surveys home to complete – we are asking for you to return them by January 28th at the very latest – sooner is better. We have a great deal of tallying/analysis to do!! Thank you for your commitment to provide your feedback.

There is another opportunity to participate within community rather than having to do the survey on your own – Wed January 24th 7:00 – 9:00 pm. James will be hosting this extra session at RHUC. Please contact the office at 905 884 1301 or office@rhuc.org to leave your name so that we make sure we have enough copies of the survey on hand.

If you would like a copy of The Menu of Options to work on at home and bring back to the church by January 28th please contact the church office at 905 884 1301 or office@rhuc.org to make arrangements to receive a document. Also, the Circles Process Team would like to clarify a couple of things to ensure everyone understands where we are in the process:

1. To the best of our ability, we gathered the input we received from the Listening and Conversation Circles into the Menu of Options in a way which we believe reflects and honours the many voices of the congregation. Every comment is not included, but when a theme emerges repeatedly, comments that enrich that theme are included in the goal/objective. Of course all of these options need to be assessed together to determine where there is sufficient energy within the congregation to pursue different initiatives.
2. The section relating to the building is by no means definitive or final in any way. We are only testing the waters/willingness of the congregation to consider ideas that emerged from the Circle Processes so far. There are many many considerations to be taken into account before any decisions about the building are made. Please do not jump to any conclusions at this point. It is very early in the process. At this point we are testing the ideas that emerged in the Listening and Conversation Circles but those will not be the only ideas considered.
3. Similarly there are financial implications to much of what has been suggested. We are acutely aware of issues related to financial sustainability, and this too will be a key consideration as we move forward. The clearer we are about our direction and values, and excited about where we are headed, the stronger the likelihood that we are able to find the resources to support our efforts.

We hope you feel that your voices are being heard. Yes – it takes a lot of time, but there is a lot at stake, and we all care deeply about RHUC and want to discern the best way forward together.

Here are some thoughts from one of our participants who completed the survey on Sunday:

"Thank you so much to the Menu of Options team! I can't even begin to imagine the amount of work to concisely capture all of the different pieces of information that were presented at our full day session at the Legion. The Menu of Options clearly had a lot of thought put into it. You were able to create a clear, significantly shorter list of ideas while at the same time still honouring what had been said at previous meetings. I could see and hear what had been said in our discussions both at the first and second meeting. We have a lot of work to do but it is now feeling possible. Thank you for all of your work and I look forward to our discussions moving forward."

We look forward to bringing all of our shared voices together for a report to the Annual Meeting on March 4th.

A very big **THANK YOU** too, to Deb in the office who helped to format and copy the survey, to Glen who prepared the food for the survey session, the coffee team and Donna Smith and the other kind folk who helped to set up and clear up!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to connect with a member of the Circles Process Team: Terry Davies, Nancy Hart, Karen Hilfman Millson (facilitator) James Ravenscroft, Joanne Scofield, Jane Wedlock

This week at a glance

Sunday, January 21 – 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

10:30 a.m. Service – Sanctuary
12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Common Room
12:00 p.m. Hands & Hearts for Africa meeting - Chapel

Monday, January 22

9:30 a.m. Shalom Seekers – Chapel
7:00 p.m. H.A.I.R. – Chapel
7:00 p.m. Cubs - gym

Tuesday, January 23

7:00 p.m. Beavers – gym
7:00 p.m. Tai Chi – Garden room

Wednesday, January 24

7:00 p.m. Scouts/Venturers – gym

Thursday, January 25

6:15 p.m. Bible Study - Chapel
7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir – Common Room

Friday, January 26

9:15 a.m. Yoga Energetics – Upper gym
A perfect way to start your day! By meditation, strengthening muscles and increasing your flow of energy.
5:00 p.m. Women's Retreat at Loretto Maryholme

Saturday, January 27

3:30 p.m. Djembe drumming –Garden Room
Women's Retreat at Loretto Maryholme

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

Sunday, January 21: We continue to hear from the first chapter of Mark (Mark 1:14-20) as Jesus begins his ministry and calls his first disciples. In "Red Light, Green Light" James will explore the dynamic in the narrative of stopping in order to go, be it a call to repent, that is to change direction, or the disciples leaving everything behind in order to follow Jesus.

Pulpit Exchange: Next Sunday we welcome Rev. Warren Ball from St. Matthew's United Church while James goes there to share a message. The bible reading for the day is Mark 1:21-28, where Jesus frees a person who was plagued with an "unclean spirit".

Minister's Message

I am sure that many of you were shocked when you heard on the news about the young girl being attacked by a man who tried to cut off her hijab. I am sure you were shocked even more when it came out this week that she was not attacked after all. While many were relieved that she hadn't been the subject of a hate crime. just as many were left feeling bewildered as to why she would cry wolf as she did. Some surmised she'd been put up to it by an adult as a way to draw attention to Islamophobia. Ironically that kind of assumption is itself connected to prejudice. Perhaps instead we should remember what it is like to be 11 years old, to think pulling a prank is a good idea and then suddenly it goes very wrong. What we certainly don't want to happen is for victims of hate crimes to not report them for fear they won't be believed. The whole saga reminds me of the need to withhold judgment and give people the benefit of the doubt. After all we are to treat people as we wish to be treated, even when they make mistakes.

Forest Church in February

Our upcoming Forest Church experience is scheduled for February 4 at 3:00 pm. We will gather for a meditation walk in Phyllis Rawlinson Park (park near the gate) during which we will gather natural objects to create a large mandala. We will conclude with hot drinks and snacks. The park roads are not plowed so be sure to wear snow boots and warm clothes. Forest Church events are open to everyone so remember to invite your friends.

Adult Baptism /Membership

Do you want to learn more about the teachings of Jesus and what it means to be Christian? Are you interested in becoming a member of Richmond Hill United Church? Are you seeking to grow spiritually? Are you looking to share your beliefs with a supportive group of friends? Then consider joining a series of teaching sessions this coming February and March (even longer depending on the needs of the group). **We will hold our first meeting on February 18 after worship.** See James for more information.

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HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Winter coats collected for First Nations Teens - update!

Warmest thanks to all RHUC folks and friends who contributed time, talent and treasured gently used or new coats and other winter wear and sports items to our shipment in support of the 100 indigenous students of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School!

[Your Certificate of Appreciation link is attached.](#) Please insert your name and print your Certificate, which is a small token in tribute, acknowledging generosity of spirit and sharing between friends. For those who shared the word of our project with others, please forward the certificate link to them so they can do the same by inserting their name and printing their own Appreciation Certificate.

Here's a summary of what we did in just over a month, thanks to everyone's wonderful support:

- 850 items were shipped
- 3 skids or pallets were sent via the generosity of three good hearted organizations ("Trucks for Change" is a charity whose founder for a small honorarium, spends hundreds of hours contacting and negotiating with many transport companies searching for space on loads heading north to the right destination at the right time, both by road and air, that the truckers might donate to charitable causes; + Snowbird Transport of Hamilton picked up our load on January 8th and took it to the ERB Transport Depot in Mississauga who took the pallets on an 18 wheeler to Thunder Bay right to the school by that Friday, which were unloaded by the phys-ed students. Erb and Snowbird donated their fees for a donation value of over \$3500!)
 - we couldn't have done this project without the generous expertise, knowledge, and connections of Rotary HIP 'Honouring Indigenous Peoples' and especially their Executive Director John Currie - who we thank!
 - Self Stor Richmond Hill donated 45 large shipping cartons and Reprodex Willowdale donated colour printing of promo flyers. Costco Yorkdale was another corporate donor.

Many groups, organizations and individuals - well over 100 - donated the 850 items or funding.

We sent, with the help of 36 volunteers who came out to our two Work Parties - photo attached - to sort, log, pack and ship:

- 184 coats in almost equal #s of adult size S, M, L and XL
- many pairs of boots and mitts, and running shoes
- 75 hats, lots of scarves, some snow pants
- hoodies and sweaters and layers of clothing to supplement
- 19 backpacks; lots of running shoes and other shoes
- a team's worth supply of soccer uniforms and another of hockey uniforms, plus soccer balls and other sports gear and more!

A prayer shawl hand knit by our Senior Elder Viola Butler was sent, and was given to a young girl who had just lost her uncle over the Christmas holidays, to suicide, which she was very pleased to receive. Lots of cards and letters from RHUC folks sending good wishes in cards, notes and letters of support and encouragement were included in the shipment and the teens were thrilled to learn that we know of their efforts to get their education away from home throughout their teen years, and that we care. The winter outerwear is already being put to good use - the school's Sports Director tells us the students have gone out dog sledding and everyone's warm and dry thanks to RHUC and friends!

Donations totalled just over \$1500 of which most went to purchasing \$149 parkas on sale in large sizes for \$49 each at Canadian Tire and minor packing and shipping costs, and the remaining \$600 will be used for local purchases to supplement sizes and items need, purchased in Thunder Bay. With the leadership of Outreach, RHUC is sending \$1000 of RHUC Special Advent Givings to assist DFC school's programs supporting the students as well - and the school is hugely grateful for this support.

Thanks to all participants, donors, RHUC staff, volunteers and friends! *Living in Right Relations Team, Outreach*



Hands & Hearts for Africa

MEETING JAN. 21 at 12 NOON: Hands and Hearts for Africa will meet in the chapel at 12 noon on Sun., Jan. 21 for a 10th anniversary DVD from Stephen Lewis Foundation. We will also be planning for our Sat. Feb 24 Sock Hop with the fabulous band Little Peter and the Elegants. We welcome helpers for our events and newcomers. For more information speak to Peg Hiscoke or Donna Harrison about the work SLF does for African AIDS families.

Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Our gifts for Mission & Service support new ministers. United Fresh Start is a program offered by the General Council Office through trained presbytery-based facilitators. The goal of the program is to nurture the pastoral relationship between a minister and key congregational leaders, especially at the beginning of a pastoral relationship after a new minister is called or appointed. Over two years, a facilitator works through pieces of the United Fresh Start curriculum with the minister and key congregational leaders to facilitate effective leadership, cooperation, mutuality, creative problem solving, and potential reductions in conflict. "The program enables shared learning and growing as a tool for strengthening and enhancing the new ministry relationship," reports Bob Wallace, a facilitator in South Alberta Presbytery. Brenda Watt, a facilitator in Foothills Presbytery, says, "I have watched relationships and attitudes be transformed with renewed enthusiasm and awareness. I have experienced creativity and collaboration emerge from inspired participants who are willing to step outside of their comfort zones and their typical boxes to seek new ways of reflecting on, behaving, and leading in their relationships with others. I am especially grateful for Mission & Service funding and to our church leadership for having the foresight to bring this program into our midst!" A vibrant ministry that shares in God's mission of love with our neighbours is often rooted in a healthy pastoral relationship. Thanks to Mission & Service for supporting United Fresh Start and other programs for vital ministry personnel and their healthy pastoral relationships. If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.

Out of the Cold

We have the dates and menus set for this year at St. Mary's Anglican on Mondays. We will be preparing 4 dinners:

- Jan. 29 - Shepherd's Pie
- Feb. 12 - Beef stew
- Feb. 26 - Chicken Quesadillas
- March 26 - Roast chicken.

In case you are interested and/or available, we get together from 1 to 4 in the kitchen at St. Mary's Anglican Church and prep the main, veggies and salad. It's lots of fun and not usually much later than 3:30. If anyone would like to contribute salad materials that would be great. I make the dressing but always need greens etc. Just bring them directly to St. Mary's the day of. We aren't responsible for desserts this year as they usually get lots of contributions but homemade cookies and bars are always welcome for snacks and bag lunches. Just bring them to the RHUC kitchen large fridge labelled in a disposable container. I can't promise to get people's family heirloom cookie tins back to them. **If you would like to serve or help in other ways from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 29, Feb. 12th, Feb. 26 or March 26, give your name to me and I'll pass it along.** Thanks for your help in past years and looking forward to working together again this year. *Lyn May, Chair of Outreach*

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

Youth Retreat

The following weekend, Sunday, February 4 we are scheduled to have our youth group assist James in leading the service. They will be spending all day (Saturday, February 3) at the church for a retreat day, including having a sleepover.

Bible Study

Bible Study will resume next Thursday, January 18 at 6:15 pm. No need to have been before. Come once. Or every week. Or drop in every so often. We will look at the reading for the upcoming Sunday, in this case Mark 1:4-11. See you in the chapel!

Shalom Seekers

Please join us on **Monday, January 22 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.** in the Chapel to continue our exploration of the 500th year since the Protestant Reformation. Through the DVD "This Changed Everything" we will look at such topics as the English Reformation, Elizabeth I, Henry VIII, and more. New members are always welcome at any time. Please speak to facilitators Peg Hiscoke, Dawn Moon or Sandra Loughton for more details.

H.A.I.R.

Each Monday evening from 7:00 - 8:30 pm, RHUC's evening discussion group gathers in the chapel.

- On Monday, January 22 we will begin a video series called "The Challenge of Paul". Featuring renowned historical Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan, this video series explores the world of Paul's time and place. Crossan pushes past generations of doctrine and dogma to reveal the real-life character of Paul who shaped a generation of courageous Christ-followers to boldly challenge the greed and violence of the Roman Empire.

Women's Winter Retreat - 2018

This will be **RHUC's eighth annual Women's Winter Retreat at Loretto Maryholme (Theme: Nurturing the Spirit Within): www.lorettomaryholme.ca** - a beautiful estate home on the shore of Lake Simcoe, just outside Keswick. This location is nice and close, about a 45 min. drive from the church. We gather for a program, with group and individual time, to discuss and reflect about our faith and we get to know others. And we eat and have fun also! Sitting at a warm fireplace or going for a walk in the snow brings us relaxation and rejuvenation. Date for 2018 is **evening Friday January 26th to afternoon Sunday January 28th**. Some come for the two nights, some for one night and some for Saturday only. The cost for accommodation and food for two nights is \$120; for one night \$60; and for the day only is \$35. For further information contact Donna Smith, 905-884-6307. **All women are warmly welcome to come!**

Please note: People wanting to attend all or part of this Retreat must register with Donna Smith as accommodation is limited and dictated by the fire department serving Maryholme and we adhere to that order.

UCW

Hold the date for the **UCW Spring Luncheon on Saturday, April 21 at 1:00 p.m.**

RHUC Book Club

Please join us on **Wednesday, January 31st at 7 p.m. in the Chapel** to discuss Chris Bohjalian's fifteenth book, **The Sandcastle Girls**.

"This spellbinding tale travels between Aleppo, Syria, in 1915 and Bronxville, New York, in 2012—a sweeping historical love story steeped in the author's Armenian heritage, making it his most personal novel to date." (Amazon.ca)
This novel shines a light on the Armenian genocide which saw the death of 1.5 million Armenians.

For more information about the group, please call the church office at 905.884.1301 or speak to the group's facilitator, Sandra Loughton. New members are always warmly welcome to try out the group!

Special Occasions

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. Please let us know to add any special occasions that are coming up.

At the January meeting of the Richmond Hill Garden and Horticultural Society meeting and awards presentation for 2017, **Jacky Dedlow** was presented with two trophies, one for highest points for pelargoniums (geraniums) and the other for highest points for potted plants. The Society holds six flower shows each year which are judged by accredited members of the Ontario Horticulture Society. Congratulations Jacky! Jacky also sings in our Chancel Choir.

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

A second Sunday Brunch

On **February 11** after worship, in the Garden Room, **we are hosting a potluck brunch for the LGBTQ2S community**, their friends, family and allies. Come out to this meal where all can find support and make connections. This is a time of sharing as we create the safe and accepting place that RHUC strives to be.



Lay Pastoral Visitors

The hospital service officiated by RHUC members, held at Mackenzie Health, will now be held on the **4th Sunday of each month**. Donna Byres and Anne Whittingham co-chair that event regularly.

Committee

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