

This week at RHUC

Sunday, January 27

10:30 a.m. Service – Sanctuary
 12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Parlour
 12:00 p.m. Exploration Class - Chapel

Monday, January 28

9:30 a.m. Shalom Seekers – Chapel
 11:30 p.m. Krasman Lunch - gym
 7:00 p.m. H.A.I.R. – Chapel
 7:00 p.m. Cubs - gym

Tuesday, January 29

12:15 Quilting – Garden Room
 7:00 p.m. Beavers – gym

Wednesday, January 30

12:00 p.m. Bible Study – Chapel
 7:00 p.m. Scouts/Venturers – gym

Thursday, January 31

7:00 p.m. MAP & Finance meeting – Garden room
 7:30 p.m. Trustees meeting - Chapel
 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir – Parlour

Saturday, February 2

Youth group sleepover
 3:30 p.m. Djembe drumming –Garden Room

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Minister's message

We made it! After months of work on Thursday we hosted representatives of various groups and organizations in Richmond Hill for a large community consultation. We know the vision we have named for our future - being a "Centre for Community" - but now we have received feedback across different sectors in our town about the need gaps in the wider community and how our space can best be used in response. So many people logged in many hours of work to make this event a success. I am so grateful for the incredible response by too many to name. We have walked one more step on the journey ahead for us as we live into our M(ission) A(ction) P(lan). And if you think that's all folks have been working on you'd be wrong. Our Facilities and Finances Team continues to discern, getting ready for a meeting with SHS Consulting next week. We have a Governance Review Task Group that has been looking at the way we organize ourselves and will be presenting a proposal first in summary and then in a couple of feedback sessions in February. A team are evaluating our children's and youth ministries and have met with our Regional Youth Ministry Coordinator for input. We have a Welcoming Task Group looking at enhancing our approaches to welcome and hospitality both on a Sunday and with the groups who share our space. We have a team looking at sources for financial grants. And all of this as various committees, study groups and other teams keep doing what we do. I continue to be amazed at the passion and commitment of this community of faith. Time to give yourselves a pat on the back. Thank you for all you do!

Minister's Office Hours: James will be keep office hours from 1:00 until 5:00 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays each week. Feel free to stop in to see him.

Worship notes

Sunday, January 27: We welcome Rev. Warren Ball from St. Matthew's United Church as part of a pulpit exchange. Rev. Warren will be reflecting on John 2:1-11 and Psalm 36. The gospel reading is about Jesus attending a wedding feast in Cana. When the wine runs out Mary intervenes and asks Jesus to fix the situation. Although James will be at St. Matthew's to lead worship, he will be back by 12 noon to lead the Faith Exploration Session in his Office.

January Forest Church activity: Meditation Walk and Mandala Making on January 27 at **3:00 pm at Phyllis Rawlinson Park**. Take part in a meditative walk followed by a joint mandala making activity using found objects. We will take time to give thanks for the strengthening light and the promise of the coming spring. Be sure to dress warmly. Refreshments to follow.

Sunday, February 3: Following their retreat and sleepover at the church, our Youth Group will be co-leading worship as we reflect on our faith stories and consider how to respond to our call, even when it is hard to do so (Luke 4:22-30).

After worship, the Vision Keepers Committee is hosting a pot luck lunch in the Garden Room for our LGBTQ community, their friends, families and allies. We held this event last year and it was well attended and appreciated; we can find support and make connections with each other. This is a time of sharing as we create the safe and accepting place that RHUC strives to be.

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY

Community Engagement Task Group – volunteers needed for Community Roundtable!

Community Roundtable: Thursday, January 24 from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. As part of the ongoing implementation of our Mission Action Plan to become "a centre for community", the Community Engagement Task Group has been organizing a community roundtable with leaders in various sectors in our town.

To help make the roundtable a success we are still in need of: 2 parking attendants (these people simply give a map of parking areas nearby to those seeking a spot), 3 greeters (to help serve appetizers and drinks during the evening), 3 recorders (take notes of the table conversations on a laptop or tablet, or if handwritten to transcribe on a computer within 36 hours). Please sign up in Centennial Hall after worship on Sunday.

Living In Right Relations Committee

In the news....

B.C. Pipeline and the United Church

United Church Moderator Dr. Richard Bott wrote to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau January 18, 2019. His letter requests a "response from government and from police [that] will model calmness, compassion and restraint" toward those whose land is the Wet'suwet'en territory. To view the complete letter, click on the link below.

https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/wetsuweten_letter_to_pm_trudeau.pdf

RCMP Swearing In Ceremonies and the Eagle Feather

This past Tuesday, an announcement was made by the Manitoba RCMP will now allow eagle feathers to be used "for swearing in victims, witnesses, suspects and police officers when they give statements. The feathers — considered an important spiritual symbol in many First Nations cultures — can now be used in the way Bibles or affirmations are already used." Assembly of First Nations Manitoba Regional Chief Kevin Hart had this to say, "I think it's going to have a big impact on our people," he said. "When people swear on the Bible, given what happened between the churches and residential schools, there is a traumatic affect in our communities even today.

In the fall of 2017, Nova Scotia's RCMP became the first province in Canada to use the eagle feather for police services.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-rcmp-eagle-feathers-1.4988756>

Last Sunday's service 'Minute for Reconciliation'

"As part of our ongoing commitment as a *Living into Right Relations Circle* here at Richmond Hill United Church, we are sharing some of the "Calls to Action" from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, especially those that are directed toward the churches that ran Indian Residential Schools. Known as the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, The United Church of Canada was one such church.

Call to Action #59 reads as follows:

We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.

One of the ways we are living into this Call to Action as a congregation is to have a Living into Right Relations group. If you would like to be a part of this group within our congregation and so learn more about our church's role in this chapter of Canadian history and how we can set a new direction, please speak with [any of the members of the LIRR Circle - James Ravenscroft, Lyn May, Esther Collier, Paula Windsor, Tracy Wixon, Carolyn You, and Kathy McBey].

Cash Cards

If you would like to order Cash cards this month please submit your order by Wed., Jan. 30. Thank you!

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

RHUC Quilters

It's back to quilting this coming **Tuesday, January 29th in the Garden Room from 12:15 pm to 3 pm**. We will be finishing the House quilt and starting the Wacky Web. All are welcome. Bring your lunch and there will be tea available. Contact Penny Fabbro for more information.

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Hands & Hearts for Africa meeting

HANDS AND HEARTS FOR AFRICA MEETING POSTPONED TO SUNDAY JANUARY 27th.

All are welcome to attend our **January 27th Meeting of Hands and Hearts for Africa in the Garden Room after the service from 12 noon until 1pm**. We will be firming up plans for our fabulous February 23 Sock Hop which includes live music, pasta dinner and, this year, a slightly more elegant silent auction.

We will be discussing a recent January letter from Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, director of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. In this letter, we will celebrate small steps towards an AIDS free Africa but we will also hear her frustrations and disappointments. If you are curious about the work of the Foundation, please come and join us. We welcome new helpers at our events, especially teens that need community service hours. For more information, come to the Garden Room on January 27th or speak to Peg Hiscoke or Donna Harrison.

Hands & Hearts for Africa Virtual Walk

Virtual Walk Around Africa: Approaching Namibia.

There is a saying in Namibia that the 'Left hand must learn before the right hand is broken' (in other words "Be Prepared!") 'As we trek through sub-Saharan Africa, we have been on a steep learning curve, surprised by the beauty of the land and the joy and dignity of the people. We feel especially blessed to be meeting with grandmothers who are caring for extended families impacted by AIDS. We celebrate the dignity and courage of these grandmothers who are not broken after 30 years of battling the AIDS virus but instead are vocal advocates for better healthcare, land rights, human rights for themselves and others.

We are still some distance from Windhoek in Namibia but we will be there soon. Situated in the center of the country, Windhoek lies on top of the Khomas Highland plateau at an elevation of 5430 ft. Our trek winds steeply upwards to this city, founded in 1840 by a South African farmer and then again in 1890 by Curt von Francois, an army major in the Imperial German Army. From the city we can see the Eros and Auas mountains surrounding.

Tourists often describe Windhoek as the most 'un-African' because of its cleanliness. The city center has many German-style buildings including the Tintenpalast or parliament buildings and the alte Feste fort. Because of hot water springs nearby, the city has had many names: Herero Otjimuisse or 'place of steam' and Damara which means 'firewater' in the Nama language. Windhoek in South African means 'windy corner'.

We walk slowly as the combination of altitude and temperature of 34c makes our way exhausting. Part of our trek through southern Namibia is along the rim of the Fish River Canyon which is the largest canyon in Africa, 100 miles long, 27 km wide and almost 550 meters deep. It is also supposedly the second largest canyon in the world after the Grand Canyon and a natural wonder of exposed rock with no plant life.

We are heading to the 'windy city' to meet with Lorenz Hembapu of the Catholic AIDS Action, which provides home-based care in rural areas of Namibia. As we make our way through the countryside, we understand how the geography of the land and the oppressive heat make home-based care a necessity to ensure meds are taken and much-needed counselling and testing supports are received.

Breakfast club volunteers needed!

Looking for bright, cheerful volunteers to assist with making nutritional breakfasts for our students Tuesday morning from approximately 8:00 -9:30 a.m. at Sixteenth Ave., P.S. No experience needed. Contact Lezlie Hood at Sixteenth Avenue P.S. 400 Sixteenth Avenue, Richmond Hill *tel: 905-884-5598 ext. 101*

Net Zero event at RHUC

We will be running an important networking event to target climate change in Richmond Hill. Please print and share this flyer wherever you can and come with your questions, anxieties, and concerns. We want to act together, not alone, and to ensure the next generation knows we are not ignoring a crisis that they will have to face.

- **February 9th, 2019**
- Sanctuary and Centennial Hall
- 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- experts from the town, engineering and science sectors, funding and legal experts, and vendors will be present with plenty of time to answer questions and resolve issues together
- contact targetclimatechange@gmail.com with questions and to indicate interest

Net Zero on Bill 66

Bill 66 is currently making waves in our community (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-42/session-1/bill-66>). It is an omnibus bill from the Ontario Government that includes provisions to cancel regulations that limit development on the Green Belt and Oak Ridges Moraine, to remove the requirement for public consultation before development, and to repeal the Toxics Reduction Act, which requires certain industrial facilities to consider ways to reduce the use and emission of toxic chemicals in their operations. You can read more about the concerns here: <https://ontarionature.org/bill-66-facts/>.

Richmond Hill council has chosen to not discuss the bill (in a narrowly rejected motion on Dec. 17th). A second motion to reject Bill 66 is to be put before [Council](#) at the [Feb 4](#) Committee of the Whole (COW) agenda. This meeting [starts at 4:30 pm](#). If it passes at COW, it will go to Council for final approval [on Feb 11](#). We are hoping many residents will speak strongly about their concerns at the meeting or at least attend it on February 4 (link to ask to speak is here: <https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/our-services/Council-Meetings-Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx>). You can attend this meeting by going to the council chambers on the first floor at 225 East Beaver Creek at 4:30 on February 4.

Other municipalities such as Vaughan, Aurora, Oakville, Burlington, Kitchener/Waterloo, Guelph have passed strong resolutions against it. Tell your friends, significant other, nieces, nephews, brothers, sisters and colleagues that we need their help to protect our Green Belt and Moraine – for now and in the future. The decision of today, may impact our health of tomorrow.

Minutes for Mission

Jennifer left home at age 16 and quit Grade 12 with only two months to go. But she enjoyed life, held a number of jobs, and had two long-term relationships. Turning 30 for Jennifer was a milestone, so she made a 10-year plan. First, she wanted to get her Grade 12, and she did at age 32. Then she wanted to become a continuing care assistant (CCA). Not in the plan— a single mom when Paxton was born in 2012. Jennifer says, “It was the happiest day of my life so far!” Jennifer knew she would end up on social assistance if she didn’t find a better way to support her son. She still wanted to take the CCA training, but searching for available help was a hard and discouraging process. Then she found Brunswick Street Mission in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a Mission & Service–supported community ministry. Agar, the volunteer coordinator of the Benevolent Program there, helped Jennifer create a budget and identify ways around the many barriers. A local nursing home offered a scholarship, Brunswick Street Mission covered childcare expenses and a bus pass, and its clothing and food banks helped extend Jennifer’s tight budget. Throughout the months of training Agar called regularly. “He encouraged me so much,” Jennifer says. “I wouldn’t have made it without Agar!” It’s been a long and often difficult and discouraging journey for Jennifer, but now she has graduated from the CCA program and has a full-time job! She says she loves her job, she knows she makes a difference for her patients, and she knows she is a good role model for her son.

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

Bible Study

For 2019 we are moving Bible Study to **Wednesdays at noon**. Please bring your lunch with you. This means no Thursday evening Bible Study.

H.A.I.R.

We are starting our new HAIR season with a series of 5-6 sessions that will explore the issues facing the people indigenous to Canada. We will be using the series **First Contact**: Most Canadians have never taken the time to get to know Indigenous People or visit their communities. First Contact takes six average Canadians, all with strong opinions about Indigenous People, on a unique 28-day journey into Indigenous Canada. Leaving their everyday lives behind the six will travel deep into Winnipeg, Nunavut, Alberta, Northern Ontario, and the coast of BC to visit Indigenous communities. Narrated by host and social justice activist George Stroumboulopoulos, First Contact is a journey that will turn the six participants' lives upside down. Challenging their perceptions and confronting their opinions about a world they never imagined they would see. It is an experience that will change their lives, forever. <https://aptn.ca/firstcontact/>
Please join us - the discussions are open and safe and intelligent and entertaining! Monday nights, 7:00 pm, Chapel

Faith Exploration Classes

Are you curious about the teachings of Jesus, especially how we live them out within The United Church of Canada? Do you want to translate what you were taught in Sunday School into an adult understanding? Are you wondering about baptism or considering becoming a member of RHUC through confirmation or transfer from another congregation? Or maybe you are just interested in sharing faith with other adults? Then come to James' office and explore faith with others. The sessions run from now until April in 3 week blocks based on themes. Faith Exploration Classes are at noon on Sunday. Everyone welcome.

Section 2: Who is Jesus?

January 27: Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Section 3: What does it mean to be church?

February 10: The gift of the Spirit

February 24: Being Church

March 3: How do we worship?

Section 4: Living in Faith

March 17: Living with Respect in Creation

March 24: Living in Service

March 31: Living for Just Relationships

April 7: Living with difficult ethical questions

April 20: Retreat Day

Women's Retreat

All women are invited to come to the RHUC's Women's Winter Retreat at Loretto Maryholme, a beautiful estate home on the shore of Lake Simcoe, just outside Keswick: www.lorettomaryhome.ca. This location is nice and close, about 45 min. drive from the church. We gather for a program, with group and individual time to discuss our faith and we get to know each other better than a "hello" on a Sunday morning. And we eat and have fun also! Sitting at a warm fireplace or going for a walk in the snow (hopefully) brings us relaxation and rejuvenation. The date for this our ninth retreat is the **evening Friday February 8th to the afternoon Sunday February 10th**. Some stay for the two nights, some one night and some come just for Saturday. The cost for accommodation and food for two nights is \$125; for one night \$65; and for the day only is \$35. For further information contact Donna Smith, 905-884-6307. Consider this your welcoming invitation to attend!

RHUC Book Club

Please join us on Wednesday, **February 27th** at 7 p.m. in the Chapel to discuss the novel *Please Look After Mom* by Kyung-Sook Shin. "Told through the piercing voices and urgent perspectives of a daughter, son, husband, and mother, *Please Look After Mom* is at once an authentic picture of contemporary life in Korea and a universal story of family love." (Book jacket). "Shin renders a tender and beautiful portrait of South Korea, but the novel recognizes a dilemma experienced throughout the world." Ms. Magazine

Sixteen copies of the book have been obtained for everyone from the Markham Public Library. Please contact Sandra Loughton to see about getting a copy if you missed the meeting on January 23rd.

New members are always welcome. For more information, please call Deb Fratin in the church office at 905.884.1301, Ext. 5.

Shalom Seekers

Please join us on **Monday, January 28th from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the PARLOUR** (just for this week). We will be listening to a podcast from OnBeing.org -- an interview with Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, entitled "The Wisdom of Tenderness".

The following week we will be starting a new book entitled "Learning to Walk in the Dark" by Barbara Brown Taylor. Copies will be distributed on Monday or later in the week if you are absent on Monday. Please contact Sandra regarding picking up the books.

For more information, please speak to one of the facilitators: Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton, or call Deb Fratin in the church office at 905.884.1301, Ext. 5. New members always welcome!

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.

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.