



### 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:** For the last couple of weeks I've tuned in to CBC to watch the BBC version of "Les Misérables". My main experience of the story was via the Broadway show, so I find myself constantly reminded of songs from the musical. It is a really good production (even without any singing). You can find it on CBC Gem.

As much as I have been enjoying the miniseries, I was struck right away by the tone of judgement that pervades the story. Each character either judges another or is impacted by that judgment. Monsieur Gillenormand judges his son-in-law, depriving his grandson of his father's love. Bishop Myriel's

housekeeper judges Jean Valjean, as much for how he looks as for his past. The shop floor supervisor judges Fantine, so much so that she is fired, condemning her to the street. Even one of the nuns who takes care of Fantine on her deathbed questions why Valjean would be willing to help her.

I would like to think that such judgments are past us, but we well know that is not the case. This is highlighted each January as we mark "Let's Talk Day" and seek to break the silence around issues of mental health. We need to talk about mental health and break through the stigma that is still so much a part of how mental illness is perceived. Why is that? Generally, when someone is diagnosed with cancer or heart disease, their family and friends rally around them. But the same cannot be guaranteed when someone is told they have bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. They are treatable illnesses too, but ones we still associate with personal weakness or moral failure.

As many of you know, my mom struggled with clinical depression when I was a child. I still remember the hushed tones surrounding her being hospitalized, something that would not have been the case if she was being treated for diabetes. I am thankful for campaigns like "Let's Talk Day". We need to break through the stigma and be upfront with one another. Only then will we create the space for support. Support is a critical part of anyone's health, whether they are facing an acute disease or managing a chronic condition. We can all help nurture supportive relationships, be it through an organization like "Home on the Hill" or simply being a friend. We all have a role in letting people know they are supported and cared for.

As much as there is a tone of judgment between characters in "Les Misérables", there are also moments of support and care. This is particularly the case in regard to the kindness offered by Bishop Myriel towards Valjean, a kindness that Valjean pays forward. It is a reminder of the kind of world we can nurture when we help one another rather than offer judgment and perpetuate stigma. Bishop Myriel saw past Valjean's situation and gave him the dignity he deserved. May we all offer each other as much.

## worship and music

**Sunday, January 31:** We reflect on Mark 1:21-28 as Jesus turns his attention to his ministry of healing, liberating someone from an unclean spirit. Of note is how Jesus teaches with authority, unlike the teachers of the Law. We also hear an excerpt from Gregory Boyle's *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*. Julia Ye has entitled her message, "Treat Them Right".

[Order of service](#)     [Hymns](#)     [Discovery Time at home](#)  
James' video to children: <https://1drv.ms/v/s!AIBjmozEVDROgaJkX7u0bFCfczfcNA>

**Sunday, February 7:** As we mark another Ember Day, we take time to focus on the gift of creation and the importance of tackling the climate crisis. We will reflect on Isaiah 40:21-31 and "Smallness" from *Aotearoa Psalms* by Joy Cowley. We also begin Black History Month.

**Sunday, February 14:** We celebrate the last Sunday before Lent with a reflection on Mark 9:2-9, his version of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Ian Wilgus will be our guest preacher. We also share communion virtually.

**Wednesday, February 17:** We begin the Season of Lent with a virtual gathering for Ash Wednesday. We will gather via Zoom at 7:15 pm following a shortened Meditation time (beginning at 6:30 pm).

**Worship Notes:** When rioters stormed the Capitol in Washington, many were quick to call it a "dark" day, falling into the light-dark trap that perpetuates the anti-Black racism that many that day are guilty of. Two weeks later, Amanda Gorman offered her poem and chose her words carefully, contrasting light, not with dark, but with shade. This highlights the importance of words, not just in a poem or speech, but in how we pray, sing and preach. In the United Church, we are encouraged to be conscious of words and not to fall into judgement laced binaries. We are to do this not just in terms of race but ability as well. Too often we use blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc. as images of sin, not unlike how we describe darkness. When we find these binaries in scripture or in a hymn, we need to unpack them with fresh understanding, as well as consider them from a positive angle. We may also need to set them aside. Fortunately, in the United Church, we also compose our own prayers and liturgies, and so have creative control over how we preach and pray. Sometimes there will be slips. When this happens, please let the worship leader know about your concern so that it can be corrected in the future. As we strive to create a safer space for everyone, we need to be conscious of what we are saying as we pray, preach and sing.



**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

**Pub Theology: Friday, January 29 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.

**Shalom Seekers:** Please join us on Zoom on **Monday, February 1st at 10 a.m.** to continue our study of **Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others** by Barbara Brown Taylor. This coming week we'll be looking at Chapter 12: The Final Exam. Come and find out what's on the exam!

For more details about the group, please contact Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton, Co-Facilitators.

**LENTEN BOOK STUDY:** Rev. James Ravenscroft is offering a Lenten Book Study which will take place **on Zoom (or via telephone) on Thursdays from 7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. on the following six dates: February 18 and 25, March 4, 11, 18 and 25.**

The two books we'll be reading and discussing in tandem are *The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power* by Desmond Cole **AND** *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality* by Bob Joseph. Specific chapters from the two books will be assigned for each session. This study will be a way for us to explore the reality of systemic racism in Canada.

You will be notified when the books come in and we'll arrange the best way to distribute them.



**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:** Our Monday-evening study group, HAIR (Heretics, Agnostics, Infidels and Other Riffraff), will resume **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 [dllbrown@yorku.ca](mailto:dllbrown@yorku.ca).

**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](mailto:james@rhuc.org)) for Zoom links to both prayer times

## church news

**David and Ann Leyton-Brown** are thrilled to announce the birth of their grandson, Apollo Walker Brown, 7 lbs 5 oz, on Tue., Jan. 26. Congratulations to all!

We received really good news this week. Rev. Linda Butler, who has been **Joanne Scofield's** ministry supervisor, called to let us know that Joanne passed her candidacy interview and so has completed the last step before ordination. Joanne was part of RHUC for many years and shared her great gifts freely. We are blessed to have shared her initial steps toward ministry with her and now the wider church will be equally blessed. Congratulations Joanne!

**A message from our student minister:** Dear Friends, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. As most of you may already know, I am doing my ministry internship this year at RHUC. It is a great joy for me to work in my home church. I am grateful for the opportunities to serve as I have been served. This is my last semester of seminary study at Tyndale. Thank you all for the support and encouragement you have given me as I train for ministry. My goal during my internship is to learn about intercultural ministry and how to apply it in a congregational setting. It is challenging not to meet with people physically and not to learn in a "normal" situation, but I know I will learn a lot with all of you. I pray for wisdom and creativity. May I use the time of internship well in learning and in ministry with you. I welcome any suggestions and feedback you will give to help me improve and grow. *Julia Ye*

**Staff:** Due to the province wide shut-down, James and Deb are now work remotely from home. James can be reached via cell at 647-705-2754 or email at [james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org). Email Deb at [office@rhuc.org](mailto:office@rhuc.org) or phone message at 905-884-1301 ext. 5.

**Mission Action Plan Update:** We have continued over this past year to work with SHS Consulting to move forward with the work associated with seeking a re-development partner(s) for the Village Commons (former CD Building) as agreed at our last AGM.

Work this year has included completion of a property survey and environmental assessment - both of which are required as part of preparation for the development of a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) that will be sent out to a targeted list of developers.

On December 4, 2020, SHS Consulting led an online Design Workshop with groups currently using RHUC facilities and others in the community that have expressed interest. This included a number of social services, environmental organizations and arts groups - including the Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts that sees our vision of a Centre for Community and the Arts as an important potential development in the village core.

The energy and level of interest at the session on December 4th illustrated how much demand there is for partnership in community space and how different groups can see themselves working in collaboration. Some organizations were unable to attend and follow up activities are planned to ensure their input is captured.

RHUC space needs will of course also be included in the overall summary that will be part of the REOI.

There will be a joint Mission Action Business Plan (MABP)/Board meeting on Feb. 10th with SHS Consulting to ensure everyone is up to speed re proposed next steps. An online meeting with interested members of the congregation to share more detailed information and proposed work plan for 2021 is planned for later in February - date to be confirmed.



## 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](mailto:office@rhuc.org).

**Chocolate sauce** for perfect sweet charcuterie:

- 80 g dark chocolate
- 5 g cocoa
- 80 g heavy cream hot
- 15 g condensed milk
- Big pinch flaky salt

**METHOD**

1. Add chocolate to a heat-proof bowl. Sift in cocoa powder to ensure no clumps.
2. Add condensed milk, and then pour very hot cream over the mixture.
3. Let sit for a minute and then whisk it together. Add salt and serve.

## outreach

**Out of the Cold:** Join the RHUC Team for a virtual walk on **Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup>** for the Out-of-the-Cold's annual fundraiser. We will need a team name to register so send your suggestion to Donna Smith, [donnasmith44@rogers.com](mailto: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.

**Targeting Climate Change:** 'It is our urgent Toronto 350 call to action to make Bill12 stronger according to expert recommendations. Below is our 'short' notice. You will see links to a letter for ideas and includes the main essential recommendations. Also lists of key figures with e mail addresses. The Standing Committee will convene on Jan 25 and then the bill will return to the House for the vote. Time is short.

- Strengthen Bill C-12 – Here's how, Act now and Thrive

**THREE SIMPLE STEPS CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.**

**While the federal government's Climate Accountability Act, Bill C-12, is a step forward, it leaves much to be desired. There are critical gaps in this proposed legislation that must be addressed if Canada has any hope of fulfilling its climate commitments and doing its part to avoid climate catastrophe.** But there's hope – the bill has not been passed and can still be amended. We must put as much public and media pressure as possible on the key decision-makers, demanding that they make reasonable changes to **strengthen the bill** into one that will actually deliver.

We are asking you to help make this happen by doing **three simple things**.

1. **SEND AN EMAIL** to select members of the Standing Committee on Environment & Sustainable Development (who will help to decide if further changes to the bill are warranted). Copy the Prime Minister and his office, the Minister of the Environment & Climate Change and his office, and members of the media who support climate advocacy and can help to amplify our voices.
2. **SEND AN EMAIL** to your local Member of Parliament asking them to relay your concerns to the government and requesting a response back from them.

Your email could be **especially impactful** if you live in one of the Standing Committee member's ridings!

**To make things easy, we've prepared a [LETTER TEMPLATE & CONTACT LIST](#).**

3. **SHARE THIS LETTER** with as many people as possible and ask them to take the same steps. [Click here](#) for a copy of the **action, contact list & letter template** all in one.

In Solidarity, Toronto 350'

## community news

**Richmond Hill Winter Carnival:** <http://www.wintercarnival.net/>  
For online [activities](#) - from word searches to crosswords to our very first Scavenger Hunt!

Suspension of licence renewal requirements for drivers 80 and older raises concerns:

<https://www.cp24.com/news/suspension-of-licence-renewal-requirements-for-drivers-80-and-older-raises-concerns-1.5279577>

**Rainbow Space events for February 2021:**

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

**York Region Food Network:** Want to reduce your household's food waste? Take the "Good Food Challenge" and don't let good food go to waste! Over the course of 4 weeks make simple changes to your routine that save money, time, food and the environment! Hosted by [York Region Food Network](#) , [Neighbours for the Planet](#) and [York Region \(The Regional Municipality of York\)](#) , the challenge runs February 1 to 28, 2021.

Weekly prizes to be won with a grand prize valued at \$250! Register here: <http://ow.ly/WCIC50D5QBK>

### Winter 2021 Programming

Five Oaks is offering many online courses in the coming weeks – 2-day 'mini retreats' and also some short courses on weekday evenings.

All course listings and registration can be accessed by visiting <http://fiveoaks.on.ca/program-schedule>

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