

DISCERNING FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RHUC –

PLEASE PLAN TO SHARE YOUR VOICE IN THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR CIRCLE PROCESS
January 14th 12 – 2 pm at RHUC

The planning team has been hard at work synthesizing responses from our Listening and Conversation Circles.

THE MENU OF OPTIONS

This phase of the process is to move us close to the priorities we will be setting for the congregation based on congregational input.

We have developed a survey that we will be completing individually - but all at the same time - on January 14th after worship. There will be two locations - one in the Gym and one in the Garden Room.

The survey will present a Menu of Options in 8 areas of church life - and you will have a chance to indicate what is important to you and where you might be interested in getting involved. There will be an additional section which speaks to our RHUC buildings. The results of this survey will be brought to the Annual General Meeting for consideration by the congregation.

In addition to initiatives/directions that may be new for RHUC - we are also aware that in order to take on new projects - there will be an essential need to let some things go. This will be an important piece of our intentional shared work as we move forward together.

We plan to offer some simple refreshment to keep you going while we do the survey. We believe doing this together will invite us to collectively share our opinions and for the Spirit to be in our midst as we do this work.

If you are unable to attend and would like to fill out a survey - please let the office know and we will have them available for pickup. We want to ensure that as many as possible are completed. It is critical that we get your input as soon as possible after January 14th.

Your planning team, Terry, James, Joanne, Nancy, Jane and Karen

This week at a glance

<p>Sunday, January 7 - Epiphany 10:30 a.m. Service – Sanctuary 12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Common Room</p> <p>Monday, January 8 9:30 a.m. Shalom Seekers – Chapel 7:00 p.m. H.A.I.R. – Chapel 7:00 p.m. Cubs - gym</p> <p>Tuesday, January 9 7:00 p.m. Beavers – gym 7:00 p.m. Tai Chi – Garden room</p> <p>Wednesday, January 10 10:00 a.m. UCW – Chapel 7:00 p.m. Council – Common Room 7:00 p.m. Scouts/Venturers – gym</p>	<p>Thursday, January 11 6:15 p.m. Bible Study - Chapel 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir – Common Room</p> <p>Friday, January 12 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.</p> <p>Saturday, January 13 8:15 a.m. Men’s Breakfast – lower gym 10:00 a.m. Women’s Spirituality - 302-67 Richmond St. 3:30 p.m. Djembe drumming –Garden Room</p>
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WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

Sunday, January 7: We will be marking Epiphany, the last Sunday of the Christmas season. We will celebrate communion and so there will not be a "Learning Together" time. Children and youth will go to their program areas after we light the Christmas candle, returning to share in communion. Our bible reading is Matthew 2:1-12. The sermon, entitled "We are family" will explore the significance of magi coming from a foreign land to pay homage to Jesus and how that changes how we relate to one another. Next Sunday we mark the "Baptism of Jesus" as we look at Mark 1:4-11.

Minister's Message

According to medieval tradition, the magi were named Gaspar, Balthasar and Melchior. Three magi because there were three gifts, and conveniently in the popular consciousness with three "races" - African, Middle Eastern and European - the magi came to represent the whole world coming to pay homage to Jesus. I wonder if the same idea would have emerged if Europeans had more contact with Asia or had known of the Americas or Australia or the Pacific Islands. Would Indians have also been added into the mix? Would the "newer" groups be relegated to helper status? That's a likely scenario given how quickly we shifted from a narrative of all peoples coming to Bethlehem to one of pre-eminence for one race over others. We may live in a world where the experience of colonialism set the stage for modern day white privilege but we certainly don't need to stay there. May our celebration of Epiphany remind us that the distinctions we make between cultural and racial groups are arbitrary. We share one world, all of us one family.

Scripture readings – power of language

Have you ever thought about the power of the language you learned as a child compared to those you learned later in life? They speak at a heart level, something that is so important when it comes to the Bible. With this in mind, beginning in Advent, we plan to begin offering print versions of each week's scripture reading in languages other than English. If this is something you would appreciate, please let Deb or James know what language would be most meaningful for you and, if you know, what version of the Bible you prefer.

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Our gifts for Mission & Service support displaced people. The widespread displacement of people is a crisis around the world. In 2014 the United Nations High Commission for Refugees reported 19.5 million refugees—those fleeing their homes across international borders—and 38.2 million internally displaced people—those who remain within their own country but cannot return to their homes. Throughout 2015, many more undocumented people were displaced as refugees or were internally displaced due to natural disasters, including here in Canada. More than half of refugees and displaced people are under the age of 18. Through Mission & Service, the United Church and our partners are addressing the needs of displaced people in many ways: ☐ Mission & Service provides for the basic needs of displaced people. As the number grows globally the need for resources for housing, shelter, medical assistance, and education also increases. ☐ Through refugee sponsorship, congregations and community groups are working hard to provide the emotional, financial, and practical support refugees need to positively integrate into Canadian society. Mission & Service funds the refugee sponsorship program staff that assist congregations. ☐ Congregations respond to immediate needs of refugee claimants entering Canada. Mission & Service funds the national program staff that provide advice and guidance to congregations. ☐ Mission & Service funds the United Church's participation in the Canadian Council for Refugees so that we can advocate with the Canadian government on refugee-related issues. 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.

Mask Sculpting workshop - Cancelled

It is with regret that we announce the cancellation of the Mask workshop fundraiser for Stephen Lewis Foundation that was to be held at RHUC in late January. If you had signed up, please contact Andrea Chan directly for other options at creative genius within.

Winter coats collected for First Nations Teens!

Warm thanks to the 27 energetic folks of all ages and stages from grade 9 and up, who came out after Christmas for our Winter Coats Work Party, and to all who have generously provided valued donations and support already to help the 100 First Nations students of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay!

1. HIP ('Honouring Indigenous Peoples', founded by Rotarians and now supported by Canadians coast to coast) has successfully arranged for an ERB transport truck to take our skids of packed boxes from the depot in Mississauga, to the school in Thunder Bay. Sean Spenrath, the school's Sports Director, is standing by for news of estimated delivery date and time in order to arrange for distribution of items from Richmond Hill United Church and friends, to the DFC teens in these very frosty times.
2. The next step was to arrange for a truck and driver to bring our boxes from RHUC to the Mississauga ERB transportation depot. John Currie, HIP's Executive Director, has just advised this smaller truck is coming right to RHUC this coming Monday January 8th.
3. We'd welcome a few volunteers on Monday January 8th, to help box up items donated since our Work Party, and to load the truck with cartons from Lower Centennial. If interested in helping please contact Kathy McBey (647) 458 2717 kathryn.mcbe@gmail.com.
4. If you or your friends would still like to donate items for the teens, please bring them to the Church Office or to Lower Centennial Hall between now and Monday morning. (We still need 10 coats in Adult Large size, to ensure a coat for every teen in the right sizes). Also needed:
 - outerwear head to toe (hats, mitts, gloves, scarves, snow pants, boots)
 - backpacks
 - running shoes and sports gear
5. If you know anyone who'd like to donate towards the cost of coats, gear and shipping (with an online tax receipt provided for any amount donated, every dollar goes to good use), donors just note 'Winter Coats' anywhere on the donation, which is submitted via this link: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/HIP/campaign/coatdrive>

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

Bible Study

Bible Study will resume next Thursday, January 11 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!

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be on **Saturday, January 13**. Coffee and tea will be served at 8:15am, with breakfast in the gym at 8:30 prepared by our UCW friends. New participants are always welcome. The Men's Breakfasts are a time of fellowship and camaraderie. Feel free to contact us if you're interested in more information about it. Cost is \$10 / person, with net proceeds to UCW. Please RSVP to Harry Ramsaran (hramsaran@rogers.com or 905 508 4758) by Thursday, January 11th. Thank you!

Donald Trump - the man most experts predicted would never become President of the United States - has completed his first year as President. On January 13 our Political Science professor, David Leyton-Brown, will speak about the Trump presidency, and the kind of president Donald Trump has been. All are welcome to the talk.

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Women's Spirituality

Women's Spirituality will meet on **Saturday January 13th from 10:00 till noon at 302-67 Richmond Street**. Please bring something savoury or sweet to share.

H.A.I.R.

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

- The first session of this group affectionately called HAIR (Heretics, Agnostics, Infidels and other Riffraff), will be an open conversation regarding "minimum wage hikes in an age of growing income disparity".
- The following week 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.
- Should the video series not arrive in time (it seems to be stuck in Christmas mail), we will have another open conversation, this time exploring the merits of protest in a world that increasingly focuses on identity politics.

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!**

United Church Women

Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 10th, at 9:30am** in the Chapel.

RHUC Book Club

The book club will meet again in the New Year on **Wednesday, January 31st at 7 p.m. in the Chapel** to discuss *The Sandcastle Girls* by Chris Bohjalian.

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.

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

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.