

**Daylight Saving Time** On the morning of March 12 move your clocks one hour ahead. The change to Daylight Saving Time allows us to use less energy in lighting our homes by taking advantage of the longer and later daylight hours.

## WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

### Worship

**Mar. 12<sup>th</sup> through April 2nd**

**10:30 a.m.** Each Sunday of Lent we extinguish another candle in our mutual walk with Christ.

Reading: John 3:1-17 Message by Rev. James Ravenscroft: "From Fear to Freedom" Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of darkness. He seems motivated by fear and yet Jesus helps to break through that barrier to see a path that opens into a free and authentic life. We too can be motivated by fear. Jesus offers a path for us as well.

**April 9<sup>th</sup> Palm / Passion Sunday**

**10:30 a.m.** From the triumph of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to uncertainty as shadows gather.

### Minister's Message

A dominant image for Lent is that of pilgrimage, as we join with Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. An important part of pilgrimage is walking as the pilgrim tries to reach a series of destinations en route to the final goal. However, an equally important part of pilgrimage is stopping to rest. You can only reach each milestone if you pause, take stock, change your socks, have a nap. As we enter into the second week of Lent, be sure to take rest stops, make time for meditation and prayer. Be attentive to what you see and hear each day. The wisdom you receive on the journey is often as significant as what you receive at the end of the road.

### Youth Confirmation

Youth Confirmation (Reaffirmation of Faith): This coming Lent and Easter, we will be having preparation sessions for youth to reaffirm their baptismal faith (be confirmed). We will meet on Sundays after youth choir for about 90 minutes. Please bring your lunch. We will have an information session on March 5 and then begin formally after March Break. Let James know if you are interested.

### Children & Youth Programs needs you!

Our children and youth programs are an important part of Sunday morning worship. We are currently looking for leaders for our Teen Seekers program. Curriculum is available to use and adapt for the program. If this interests you, but you're not sure what to do, Joanne is also available to help with planning. We are looking for leadership on the following dates:

- April 2
- April 9
- May 7
- May 21
- May 28
- June 4

If you can help out, please speak to Joanne Scofield or email her at [jscofield@rogers.com](mailto:jscofield@rogers.com).

## ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

### Prayer Shaw knitting

We will be gathering to knit or crochet prayer shawls again this year during Lent. Finished shawls are given to people who are unwell, grieving, moving away, and also to celebrate a birth or other special occasion as a way of showing that we care and hope the warmth of the shawl will give comfort and joy. Anyone who would like to be part of this ministry is invited to come **Thursdays March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6 and 13 in the Chapel, 5:00 to 6:00**. If this time does not fit into your schedule, please contact Donna Smith 905-884-6307 to see about arranging another time.

### The UC Observer – renewal and new subscription time!

It is renewal and new subscription time! **Annual subscription cost: \$25/year. Due date: April 10<sup>th</sup>**. (11 monthly issues - the July/August summer issue is a combined one).

If you would like to renew or start a new subscription, payment by cheque for \$25, payable to Richmond Hill UC, can be put in the offering plate or brought to the office. Thank you!

## RHUC Book Club

Please join us on **Wednesday, March 22 at 7 p.m. in the Chapel** to discuss **Under the Visible Life** by Kim Echlin. "Under the Visible Life takes readers from the bustling harbour of Karachi to the palpable political tension on the streets of 1970s Montreal to the smoky jazz clubs of New York City. Deeply affecting, vividly rendered, and sweeping in scope, it is also an exploration of the hearts of two unforgettable women: a meditation on how hope can remain alive in the darkest of times when we have someone with whom to share our burdens."

New members are always welcome to try us out. We are a friendly group and have wonderful, lively discussions. For more information, speak to Sandra Loughton or call the Church Office at 905.884.1301.

## Women's Spirituality

Women's Spirituality will gather **this Saturday March 11th, 9:45** for refreshments and visiting and **10:15** for the program in the Garden Room. Discussion: **FOUR WOMEN - 2000 YEARS - Connected by FAITH - SPIRIT - and BEFRIENDING LIFE** Hope you can come!!

## Getting to Know You

With all the boxes unpacked, Advent and Christmas well behind us and a routine slowly getting established, James would love to start getting to know people better. He's always up for a coffee or tea (and even a cookie). He'd love to come visit people in their homes, at local cafes, or even for a walk in the woods. He's open to individual, family and group visits. The key is a nice visit to get to know each other better. You can reach him by email at [james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org) or by phone either at the church or on his cell – 647.705.2754.

During the month of **March, James will be hosting an open house on Mondays from 1 to 4 pm in his office.** Pop in for a coffee and tea.

## Bible Study

James will be facilitating a Thursday evening bible study sessions from **6:30 – 7:30 PM**. We will meet in "**The Meeting Room**" (not sure what else to call Linda's office). We will begin by looking at the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday, looking at their historical and cultural contexts and the wisdom they can offer us.

## Shalom Seekers

This Monday, March 13 Shalom Seekers will not be meeting as it is March Break. On Monday, March 20, the group will be continuing their discussion of Christianity for the Rest of Us by Diana Butler Bass. The focus will be on Chapter Four: Finding Home. This book is a timely read as we begin to look forward to plans for RHUC in the future. Come join the conversation on Mondays in the chapel at 9:30 a.m. For more info, speak to Dawn Moon, Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton.

## H.A.I.R.

HAIR, the Monday evening study group, will be beginning a GREAT new book on **January 30th**. We will read and discuss the book **Faith versus Fact** by Jerry A. Coyne. The author argues that science and religion are incompatible. Come join the discussion at **7:00 p.m. in the chapel**. Copies are available from Deb in the church office for \$20.00, or pay what you can. It is an easy read and written for the layperson.

March 13 - March Break (no session)

March 20 - Chapter 4a: Faith Strikes Back (33 pp.)

March 27 - Chapter 4b: Faith Strikes Back (39 pp.)

April 3 - Chapter 5: Why Does It Matter? (39 pp.)

## Special Occasions

Writing to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul urged them: "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep". 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. This column is an effort to rectify that situation. Don't hesitate to add any special occasions you know about.

## Nurturing our Spirituality

**On the first Tuesday** of the month, **Joanne Scofield** will be offering **Yoga and Meditation** - a yoga practice that will use postures and breathing to bring the body and mind to a place of relaxation and stillness for meditation. The next Yoga and Meditation will be on **Tuesday, April 4 from 7:00 – 8:00 in the Chapel**.

## HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

### In search of rocking chairs and picnic table

Do you have a rocking chair at home that you've been thinking about donating? Consider donating it to the church. We are looking for one or two rocking chairs for the use of nursing moms and other adults with children. Thanks so much.

If you have a picnic table in good condition that is looking for a new home, RHUC could use another one for our green space. Thank you!

### Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Helping Refugees: Our gifts for Mission & Service support refugees. Let us hear a story of one of our partners. Since 2012, Jordan has received over 1.5 million refugees. Large numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees have sought safety in the country. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)-Jordan is part of the ongoing response to this crisis. MECC-Jordan approaches aid to refugees through a lens of Christian moral duty and human dignity. Referring to them as guests rather than refugees, the council insists that everything that is given is of high quality. Just because the newcomers are vulnerable and in need does not mean they should receive only what's left over. Rather than giving food parcels and clothes, MECC provides vouchers so people can choose what they want based on their needs. We sing thanksgiving for the ongoing work of the Middle East Council of Churches and its commitment to supporting refugees in Jordan. If Mission & Service is already a regular part of your giving, thank you so much! If you have not given for Mission & Service, please join me in making Mission & Service a regular part of your life of faith. In all our Mission & Service giving, with a willing heart, we sing thanksgiving to God!

### Lenten Givings

This year the focus of our **Lenten givings** will be **Doctors Without Borders or MSF Canada**. This excellent group of dedicated health professionals and volunteers spreads their efforts around the world through 70 active projects. Current highlights (or lowlights) are work with displaced people in the Syria/Lebanon/Jordan area, work in Northern Nigeria (the site of a recent bombing of a refugee camp) and helping in South Sudan where there is widespread famine. As our Advent givings supported the Toronto Native Women's Centre (over \$2000) we traditionally shift our support to a global project during Lent. We count on your support. Specially marked envelopes will be in the pews on three Sundays - March 5, 19 and 26.

## CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

### Quilting group

The **RHUC Quilters** will meet on **Saturday March 11th** in the Garden Room at 12:30. We will continue to work on our village quilt top. No quilting experience is necessary. If you like working with fabrics or fun colour matching, join us. All are welcome to bring a bagged lunch and tea will be available.

### Blog post

Lent and Easter Services at RHUC <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/lent-and-easter-services-and-events-at-richmond-hill-united-church/>

Spiritual Practices for Lent <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/spiritual-practices-for-lent/>

RHUC Bookclub March 2017 <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/03/rhuc-book-club-under-the-visible-life-march-22-2017/>

The Hop <https://rhucblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/02/the-hop/>

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.