

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

March 26th

10:30 a.m. Each Sunday of Lent we extinguish another candle in our mutual walk with Christ. Guest speaker is Laurie Hermiston, SVRT coordinator from the Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto. Reading: John 9: 1-7, 13-17, 34-38 and a quote from Richard Wagamese, Indigenous author. The reading for next week is John 11:1-45.

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn: Aboriginal issues.

April 9th Palm / Passion Sunday

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

Minister's Message

In the wake of the attack in London this week, many of us are left feeling overwhelmed. We continue to see much violence in the world, often perpetrated in the name of "God" and we wonder how can things like this happen. In the end there is no real answer. Some people use religion as a reason for their actions. Others have used their political ideology as motivation, sometimes with equally devastating results. In the end we lay the blame in the human heart, in our tendency toward tribalism, the creation of "us versus them" systems. All the more reason to make use of a contemplative season like Lent to ponder where these tendencies lurk within us, where we contribute to ongoing divisiveness in the world. May our continued reflections help us to see ourselves more clearly and to see where we can bring greater light into the world.

Easter flowers

The congregation is invited to make a donation for the purchase of Easter flowers and include a memorial/celebratory message in the Easter order of service. There will be a table in Centennial Hall after the service today where you will be able to leave your message and donation if you wish. The Sanctuary Committee

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:

- May 7
- May 28

If you can help out, please speak to Joanne Scofield or email her at 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 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.

RHUC Book Club

Please join us on **Wednesday, April 26th at 7 p.m.** in the Chapel for a discussion of the novel **LEAVING TOMORROW** by David Bergen. There are four copies of this book at the Richmond Hill libraries and four copies at the Aurora library.

The next meeting after that will take place on Wednesday, May 31st and we will be looking at the non-fiction book **The Prison Book Club** by Ann Walmsley. There are two copies of this book at the R.H. library and three copies at the Aurora library.

Please feel free to join us at any time. We had a surprise or unexpected guest at our March meeting. She (who shall remain nameless) came to the church for another meeting, but discovered that she had the wrong night. She ended up staying for the book club meeting and it was great having her there! For more details, please call the Church Office at 905.884.1301 or speak to Sandra Loughton, the group's facilitator. (bookgirl8@hotmail.com)

The UC Observer – renewal and new subscription time!

It is renewal and new subscription time! **Annual subscription cost: \$25/year. Due date: April 10th.** (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!

United Church Women – Spring Luncheon



Save the Date! **UCW Spring Luncheon on Saturday April 22nd** at 1:00 p.m. A celebration of Canada's 150th Birthday!

Women's Spirituality

Women's Spirituality will gather **this Saturday March 25th in the Garden Room at 9:45 a.m.** Program: The morning will allow us to experience a little of the teaching of Eckhart Tolle. This is common to the contemplative aspects of many of the world's religions, including Christianity. We may start with the quote-- "In you, as in each human being, there is a dimension of consciousness far deeper than thought. It is the essence of who we are."

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 or by phone either at the church or on his cell – 647.705.2754.

On **Monday, March 27, April 3 and April 10, James will be hosting an open house 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

Please join us on **Monday, March 27th from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Chapel** to continue our discussion of "Christianity for the Rest of Us" by Diana Butler Bass. For this week please read pages 71 to 87 - the introduction to Part II and Hospitality. New members are always welcome to check the group out. Speak to one of the facilitators for more details - Peg Hiscoke, Sandra Loughton or Dawn Moon - or call the church office at 905.884-1301.

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 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.

Happy birthday to **Oda Barlow** as she celebrates her 94th birthday on March 27th.

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 a picnic table

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!

Hands & Hearts for Africa meeting

HANDS AND HEARTS FOR AFRICA MEETING on **SUNDAY APRIL 2 from 12-1pm!**

Hands and Hearts for Africa will be meeting on Sunday April 2 at 12 noon. We will be discussing the latest updates from the Stephen Lewis Foundation, the challenges and successes of its grassroots work to bring about change in the lives of African AIDS families. We will also be planning future events including a special JUNE 3 CONCERT by the singing sensations, THE FOUR MEN. Newcomers are always welcome whether to learn more about the Foundation or to join us as helpers for our events. We also offer teens the opportunity to fulfill community service hours at all our events. For more information, please speak to Donna Harrison or Peg Hiscoke or email us at handsandhearts@live.ca

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.

Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Our gifts for Mission & Service support care for creation. Let us hear a story of this work. In 1987, while El Salvador's civil war raged on, displaced villagers started to return home. People from the village of Santa Marta returned determined to live in a new way. They decided to share land instead of holding individual plots. Education became their top priority. They set up a community organization called ADES (AH-dess)—the Santa Marta Economic and Social Development Association. They built a school that now graduates almost 100 students each year. Almost half go on to post-secondary institutions. ADES created a community radio station and a community bakery to produce bread at an affordable price. ADES is a social movement that functions as a non-governmental organization with a goal of achieving social and ecological justice in rural El Salvador. Farmers receive training and support as they adjust to practices that respect the earth and restore the land, avoiding expensive external inputs like chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Several greenhouses help to increase production and diversify crops. Over time, the scope of ADES's work has expanded to farmers in other villages. ADES works with other organizations to address the challenges presented by mining companies, hydro-electric projects, and industrialscale farming. We sing thanksgiving for Mission & Service partners like ADES that support sustainable farming practices and care for the earth. 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!

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY

Cash cards

Support our monthly RHUC fundraiser! Cash card order goes in on Monday, March 27th. Order forms are on RHUC's website or you can pick up a copy at the bulletin board across the church office. Thank you!

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

RHUC Quilters

Our next get together is **Saturday April 8th at 12:30 pm in the Garden Room**. Let's see if we can finish our houses and start our wacky web... All are welcome. Feel free to bring a lunch or snack. There is always hot water for tea!

Thank you!

Thank you to **Heather Burton** for the beautiful portrait of Rev. Sang Chul Lee. Be sure to take a look at it in Centennial Hall.

'Anything Goes' at the Newmarket Theatre

April 20-23, 2017 @ the Newmarket Theatre with Glen. Tickets 905-963-5122. www.wavestagetheatre.com
'Bon voyage! Set sail on a "de-lovely" cruise through some of Cole Porter's most famous songs. A brassy nightclub singer, a starry-eyed stowaway and Public Enemy No. 13 are booked on a transatlantic luxury liner bound for romance and laughter. Hum along with an easy-to-love score packed with hits including "I Get a Kick Out of You," "You're the Top," "It's De-Lovely," "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" and more!' **Glen (James' spouse) is in the production.**

News from Helen Phillips

Helen and Perry moved from Brampton a year ago to the Sarnia area. Their daughter Joanna and partner Adrian Swaby welcomed their baby boy, Shanchai Christian Swaby, born June 24, St. John's Day. Shanchai like the city (sort of); say it like ShanKEYE, Shan like in Shank (but no k, the n is sort of silent, not Shann) and Chai like EYE (with a K), not like the tea. Helen can be reached at philosoph@sympatico.ca.

Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

A Christian celebration of prayer for the Richmond Hill community. **Wednesday, May 24 from 7 – 9:00 a.m.** \$30/person. Keynote speaker: Rev. David Payne, the lead and founding pastor of The Campus Church in York Region. He has written two books: **Hitting the Wall: Finding Perspective When Life Stops Working** and **Run! The Amazing Race**. Hot breakfast, live music, free book. If you are interested in going please let Deb know in the church office and RHUC can book a table (for 10).

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, and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Published by Deb Fratin. Please submit notices by noon on Wednesday.