



Sunday worship each week is livestreamed at 10:30 AM 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](#).

To access the home based worship resource so you can use to follow along or take time for personal reflection, follow this link: [Home Prayers](#). You can find an at home "Discovery Time" with children here: [Discovery Time](#)

In this challenging time, it is important that we look after each other. If you are able to pick up groceries and other supplies for those who are homebound, please contact the church. Equally, if you are in need of this support, call the church or email [office@rhuc.org](mailto:office@rhuc.org). If you are in need of pastoral care or spiritual support, please contact Rev. James Ravenscroft. Call him at 647-705-2754 or you can reach him by email, [james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org).

May we continue to keep each other and world in prayer, especially those who are most vulnerable, those who are grieving or struggling, and all of those on the frontline putting themselves and their families at risk to keep all of us safe. We will get through this together.

**Minister's Message:** By now you will have heard the news that on May 11th an open letter calling on the province to allow churches to reopen was sent to Premier Doug Ford. There were 250 plus churches who signed it. You may have noticed that my sermon from a couple of weeks ago made a reference to it. We had been approached to sign on before its release, as I'm sure were many other United Church congregations and other faith communities. The letter argues that they are being prevented from fulfilling the gospel because they can't gather for worship. That is one viewpoint. I am so thankful that not one United Church congregation added their name. Like the many who reacted negatively to the news release, many of us feel differently than the signatories. We understand that it is difficult to do ministry from our homes with phone calls and online worship. We feel the pain of not being able to meet face to face. But the church is more than the building. Only our buildings have closed. We continue to be the church and as church we are still sharing love, reaching out to help the vulnerable, advocating for a more just and sustainable world - just differently so that we can abide by Public Health directives. It feels counterintuitive but staying closed is, for now, the most responsible, and the most loving option. A recent letter to Premier Ford from Shining Waters Regional Council says it best: *"Our deep and profound need for face-to-face human connection does not suspend the responsibility we have to our faith communities (and our wider communities!) to do everything we can to curb the spread of this virus. These are the ways in which we are choosing to live out our commitment to loving God – because loving God means loving our neighbour, even if it means we must physically stay apart from our neighbour for a little while longer."* We will eventually reopen. It is for that reason that we will be having a Zoom conversation on June 4 so we can discuss how to do this responsibly. Until then, we keep doing what we are doing, keeping everyone safe. For us this is the best way we can be church right now. Copy of letter: <https://region10.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7d85e7f4b07a283cd04585aed&id=9965512148&e=637c78f60a>

## worship and music

**Sunday, May 24:** On this second last Sunday in the Easter season, we reflect on Acts 17:22-33, when Paul addresses the council in Athens. One of the striking things about the story is how he draws on Athenian culture as a way to speak to them about the gospel. In "No Longer Other" James will examine the significance of this as well as a saying from Changsa, 8th C Zen Buddhist master, about universal unity. We need this call to respect and unity in this time as some seem to be pulling us apart when we need to come together.

**Sunday, May 31:** We celebrate Pentecost, the conclusion of the Easter season, virtual communion and pondering through the second chapter of Acts how the Spirit calls us into the world. As part of the service, we are compiling a video based on "The New Creed". Let James know if you would like to help with this.

**DIY Worship:** The outline of the worship service (prayers, readings, etc.) is found on the website. For those who would rather create their own celebration, possible hymns for **May 24** are: "Draw the Circle Wide" (MV 145), "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" (VU 264 and "Praise Our Maker" (VU 316). For **Pentecost Sunday (May 31):** "On Pentecost They Gathered" (VU195), "O Holy Spirit, by Whose Breath" (VU200) and "Spirit God, be our Breath" (MV150).

**Sunday offering:** RHUC, like other churches, depends on donations and rentals to pay our bills. Our building continues to cost money even while closed and we continue to keep our employees working, albeit in ways that are different from normal tasks. We appreciate those who use Pre Authorized Remittance (PAR). For those not PAR, please consider making sure you get your weekly envelope money in and we hope as well 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. We are keeping in touch with the United Church of Canada and governments to ensure we get what bridge funds might be available to us during physical distancing.



**Virtual Sunday School**  
Sundays from 9:30 am – 10:00 am  
Songs. Stories. Discovery. For Zoom Link, Contact – Jeffrey Dale, Youth Ministries Coordinator [jdale@united-church.ca](mailto:jdale@united-church.ca)

## church news

**Any graduates this year?** Each year as school comes to a close, we look forward to celebrating tweens, teens and young adults who are graduating. This year is no different, albeit our celebration will be. So, if you know of someone who is graduating from Grade 8, Grade 12 or from a post-secondary program, let James know (email [james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org)) so that we can be sure to recognize them during worship June 7. Please email him by May 31.

**Notes from the church gardener: Memory Garden** - As in previous years, I will plant an annual plant in memory of a person who has passed away since last June. Usually I ask donors to give me \$3 to purchase a plant but with the restrictions of COVID-19, I will use money in my petty cash fund I have developed over the years... If you would like me to include a special someone, please let me know by May 31st; when planted, their name will appear on a sign in the garden, which is beside The Village Commons building front stairs. Contact Donna Smith at 905-884-6307 or [donnasmith44@rogers.com](mailto:donnasmith44@rogers.com) Thanks!

**Perennials needed:** Someone has taken a group of hens-and-chicks plants I had planted in an old roast pan from the old kitchen before the renovation! I would like to plant more so if you have too many, pls let me know. And actually, I will take any perennials you need to divide. Thanks!

**Grocery Home Deliveries:** Do you, or someone you know, need groceries delivered to your home during COVID-19? RHUC has a team of volunteers in place to respond. We can shop on your behalf for food, prescriptions and other basic needs in local stores, and deliver to your doorstep.

**Organizers:** June Blanchette 905-780-0048, Donna Smith 905-884-6307, Doug Loweth, 416-553-8706  
How does it work? Call one of the Organizers who will get in touch with one of the Drivers. The Driver will contact the person, get the shopping list, shop and deliver to the home. Payment will be arranged between the two parties, but the shopping and delivery are free. Our thanks to the volunteers.

**Drivers:** Heather Hartung, Marise Blanchette, Amy Hammer, Gaye Spence, Nancy Coxford, Doug Loweth.  
We'll get through this by working together!

**A Minute for the Board:** As provinces slowly give permission for businesses to reopen, it is only a matter of time before churches are allowed to do the same. This will not happen right away and must done with careful planning and forethought. With this in mind, the board is planning a Zoom conversation on Thursday June 4 at 7:00 PM. Along with members of the Worship Committee, Lay Pastoral Visitors, the Family Ministry Committee (formerly CD), Property Committee, the Operations Team and the Communications Team, a special invite is being offered to medical personnel, teachers, and other frontline workers. Contact James for log-in information and to answer and questions and concerns.



### RHUC PHONE TREE CREATED & GOING LIVE NOW! We have created a Phone Tree.

Everyone in the church has been assigned to a Phone Tree branch by their postal code, so each branch is a certain area.

#### Need to change your address or tel # or Questions on Phone tree:

Email/Call Nicole or Penny.

Nicole Moore 905-508-5253 [willowrose@pathcom.com](mailto:willowrose@pathcom.com)

Penny Fabbro 905-508-6594 [pennyfabbro@rogers.com](mailto:pennyfabbro@rogers.com)

**A Request for Help:** As the self-isolating protocols continue, there is an escalating impact on our economy. Money is going to get tight for some, including friends, neighbours and members of RHUC. To this end, we invite you to help out if you can by donating grocery cards. When you order your grocery card (still a fundraiser for our church, BTW), donate a card to help someone who needs assistance. Contact Deb ([office@rhuc.org](mailto:office@rhuc.org)) for more information.

## programs for all

**Weekly Meditation:** Each Wednesday at 6:30 pm, James hosts 45 minutes of reflection and meditation via Zoom. If this is something that interests you, please let James ([james@rhuc.org](mailto:james@rhuc.org)) or Deb ([office@rhuc.org](mailto:office@rhuc.org)) know so that they can send you the log-in details.

**Shalom Seekers:** During this time of "lockdown" and social isolation, we have been keeping in touch via scheduled Zoom chats on Monday mornings, as well as regular e-mails from people checking in and sharing photos of their walks, gardens, etc. This coming May 25th you will receive an invitation e-mail as usual and until then, stay well and keep smiling. *Sandra Loughton & Peg Hiscoke, Co-Facilitators*

**RHUC BOOK CLUB:** The Book Club will be getting together again on-line for another Zoom meeting on **Wednesday, May 27th at 4 pm**. All book club members will receive an invitation e-mail before the meeting with all the necessary information. You may join via Zoom or by telephone. We will be meeting again on Zoom on either June 17 or 24 at 4 pm to discuss Ann Patchett's latest novel *The Dutch House*. The date will be confirmed after our May meeting. Stay well & keep on reading! *Sandra Loughton, Facilitator*

**Pub Theology:** We meet online once again to discuss faith, spirituality and life's big questions. The next online gathering is on **Fri., May 29 at 7:30 PM**. Contact James for the meeting log-in info.

## keeping up our spirits

**As we look to the coming days and weeks of "sheltering in place" it is important we keep our spirits up. Each week RHUC Reflections will include some ideas, reflective words, poems, recipes, pictures (send to Deb at [office@rhuc.org](mailto:office@rhuc.org)), etc. to help in this challenging time.**

**Learning about Edible Native Plants:** Now that the weather is getting warmer, many people will keep their spirits up by getting out into the garden. One fun task is selecting new plants to add to it, especially as some plants may not have overwintered very well. As you do, consider adding native plants to your garden. These are the plants that are acclimated to this area and are an important part of our region's ecosystem. Our birds, insects, pollinators, various animals all need the plants that are indigenous to the area for sources of food, places to nest, etc. After all, they co-evolved. We are in the northern end of the Carolinian Forest. We need to double the remaining area of this forest if this ecosystem is to survive. There are some unique plants that are native to here, many of which are edible. One such plant is the paw paw tree. The fruit is about the size of a mango and is supposed to taste like a cross between banana and pineapple. Yummy. As you can guess from the above, James recently took a webinar on edible plants that are native to our area. Each week he will share a bit more of what he learned.

**Ottawa Virtual Tours, Exhibitions, Activities and Performances:** <https://www.ottawatourism.ca/ottawa-insider/ottawa-virtual-tours-exhibitions-activities-and-performances/>

**Singing at home:** [My Pop Choir](#), which had a very active group here in Richmond Hill, now have a Canada wide Friday night Sing-along. Here's the [link](#) to the YouTube for last week's session.

Another local choir group, [Chorus York](#), is continuing with their annual Rain Barrel Fundraising Sale.

In this time of lockdown, many people are catching up on reading or binge- watching TV shows. Some are even creating podcasts. If you like listening to them, consider checking out "**Season's Eatings Podcast**". Glen is creating this monthly podcast of the "history and origins of your favourite Christmas foods." Go to [www.libsyn.com](http://www.libsyn.com) and search for "Season's Eatings Podcast" to listen to a teaser. Each episode will be published on the 25th of the month. If you want to subscribe you will need to wait for a bit before you can find it on Spotify or Apple Podcasts. Apparently, it can take a while for podcast platforms to publish new contributors, so, check it out. It's never too early to think about Christmas.

**May 12, 2020** marks 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale. It is well known that the “Lady with the Lamp” dramatically lowered the death rate of wounded soldiers during the Crimean War (1853–1856), which led to society’s acceptance of her proposals for better sanitation and nutrition, accurate medical knowledge, and professionally trained nurses. It is less well known that her dedication to nursing was her faithful response



to God’s call to care for the sick despite family pressures to marry and live as a conventional wealthy woman.

Year	Event
1820	born in Florence, Italy, to a wealthy British family (May 12)
1837, 1850	felt called by God to dedicate her life to nursing as a single woman
1850	visited Pastor Theodor Fliedner’s Lutheran deaconess community
1854–1855	worked as superintendent of a women’s hospital
1860	organized a nurses’ training school in London, England
1910	died in London (August 13)

### Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
 Remember those whose lives are at stake  
 May we who have no risk factors  
 Remember those most vulnerable  
 May we who have the luxury of working from home  
 Remember those who must choose  
 Between their health and making the rent  
 May we have flexibility to care for our children  
 When the schools close  
 Remember those who have no options  
 May we who have to cancel our trips  
 Remember those who have no place to go  
 May we who are losing our margin money  
 In the turmoil of the economic market  
 Remember those who have no margin at all.  
 May we who settle in for the quarantine at home  
 Remember those who have no home.  
 As fear grips our country  
 Let us choose love  
 During this time when we cannot physically  
 Wrap our arms around each other.  
 Let us find ways to be the  
 loving embrace of God to our Neighbour.     Cameron Bellim

## outreach

**RHUC family, I need your help!** There’s a project in the works at my daycare, for whenever we get back, and I am hoping you can help! We are collecting plastic bottle caps! Pop bottles, juice bottles, water bottles, sauce bottles, milk cartons...you get the idea! And we need a lot of them! I would be ever so thankful if you could collect them for me 😊 Thanks so much! *Paula Windsor*

**Minute for Mission:** Published on: May 11, 2020  
**Haiti’s Methodist Church Hosts Sewing Project to Save Lives -** Haiti can’t seem to catch a break: the 2010 earthquake, hurricanes, poor government, and now the corona virus. With more than 35 percent of its population facing hunger, the Caribbean island nation was already on a World Food Program list of food-insecure countries that require urgent attention. As of May 5, Haiti had reported 100 cases and 10 deaths from COVID-19. Testing is limited, though, and the spread of infection will likely get worse: The Dominican Republic next door recorded more than 8,000 cases and 346 deaths. In Haiti, schools are closed, leaving children at home. Families are crowded in their homes all day. Most of the time there is no city power, and sometimes the outage spans several days. Haitians who look for odd jobs (the “informal economy”) are unable to do so, resulting in less money for basic necessities. Farmers who may have food available in the fields are unable to transport it to market. Jean Lesly Dorcély, bishop of Haiti’s Methodist Church, says that its 120 local congregations are not holding public services, and limited access to Internet means that ministers have few ways to offer support. The United Church’s Mission & Service helps sustain Haiti’s Methodist Church as a whole, providing core funding that can be directed as needed. Rather than being limited to a particular project, Mission & Service funding provides support at the organizational level so life-changing programs can take place. In the face of COVID-19, for example, with financial support from a team of volunteers from the United States, the Methodist Church has set up sewing projects at seven locations to make face masks that help prevent the spread of infection. Over 5,000 masks have been made and distributed so far.

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