

May 3, 2018

Dear Friends,

On Sunday we met as a congregation after worship for the Consensus Circle to determine our way forward at RHUC. This was an official congregational meeting but convened in a different format than usual, facilitated by the consultant who has been working with us for the past 12 months – Rev. Karen Hilfman-Milson.

The final report from our year of discernment through the Circle process provided direction and has allowed us come to consensus on moving ahead with our vision of RHUC as a Centre for Community in the old village core of Richmond Hill.

We wish to emphasize that our desire is for a hopeful future for RHUC as a congregation that will see us evolve into the next chapter of vibrant ministry, informed by the values and mission that we have identified. This church has been a central part of Richmond Hill for over 200 years - and witnessed enormous change. We believe we will continue to have an important role to play in our rapidly changing neighbourhood.

However, the status quo is not an option due to our current financial position and the increasing challenge of maintaining our facilities. NO DECISIONS have been made with regard to the buildings. We are gathering the information we need over the next few months in order to make decisions. We ask that you consider your ability to share your skills, gifts, connections and ideas that may be able to assist us in this important work.

While there are 9 areas of focused intention in the report, there are 3 that are particularly urgent and it was agreed that these 3 and associated projects will be our focus in the immediate term:

Intention 2: Engage with the Community In Our Neighbourhood

Intention 3: Ensure Our Facilities Align With Our Values, Identity and Purpose

Intention 8: Be Good Stewards of our Finances and Our Facilities

It is important to note that, in terms of governance, the project teams will focus on agreed areas of activity separate from, but with oversight of Council. No decisions that have any budget implications can be made without agreement of the congregation and Council. The intention is to free up energy to focus on key priorities that will inform decision- making.

On Sunday, people in attendance had a chance to identify which are of focus they would like to contribute to, as we move forward. These groups are open - if you feel you have something to contribute and would like to be involved, your presence and participation is very welcome.

If you were not able to be present on Sunday - please feel free to contact anyone on the coordinating team to get clarification on any questions you may have and how you can be involved.

Next steps:

Each of the 3 groups will gather before the end of May for a brainstorming session to plan next steps, tasks, timelines etc. For those who are willing but for many reasons are unable to actively participate, we request that you support all these efforts in prayer. There is much to be done and it is incredibly important that we adhere to the agreements we made with one another on Sunday.

Our Agreements:

There were a few changes from what was originally printed in the report and changes were made as part of the consensus process. They are highlighted:

As a congregation, we:

- 1 Agree that we will move forward with the Projects identified that are based on our values and our mission intentions recognizing that start dates may spread out over a year or two or even three as each Project will require people who are passionate and available which indicates they can't all begin at the same time.
- 2 Agree that it will be the responsibility of Project Teams to add to and complete any info about their project such as costs, timeline, steps, evaluation where they are not currently established.
- 3 Agree that the timelines proposed for the time-sensitive issues be our targets to enable us to move forward with decision-making about our facilities and our finances and engaging our neighbourhood.
- 4 Agree that Project Teams will not function as Committees of the Council and that the Council will ensure that they exercise their constitutional responsibility for oversight and co-ordination (not to be understood as micromanagement, necessary approval of every action or control) on Projects through people's involvement or through the Coordination Team.
- 5 Agree that the Circle Planning Team become the nucleus of the new Mission Action Plan Coordinating Team based on the description of their work in the "Understanding your MAP Guide" knowing that more people will be required to do this work.
- 6 **Agree that the way we will work on these projects together will be rooted in our values that declare that we will honour one another, celebrate and encourage each other's gifts, listen for the purpose of understanding, and seek to create a sense of working together rooted in being a healthy life-giving community. OUR COVENANT**
- 7 Agree that everyone in the congregation of RHUC is invited to find ways that they can support these Projects, trusting that their input, connections, resources and expertise will be appreciated while knowing that it is the wisdom amongst us all that will guide us.
- 8 Agree that we will return often to our values to evaluate how well we are living them and return at least annually to the projects and intentions to ensure that they are being addressed in a timely manner and to ascertain if particular support is required for a project.
- 9 Agree that we will honour this year worth of work and allow it to guide us as we make decisions, evaluate our process regularly and create new Teams for the various steps of our work and agree background information is for information only.
- 10 **Agree that we will move forward prayerfully with a sense of enthusiasm based in trusting that we are being Spirit led.**

We recognize that communication and transparency are essential as we move forward and will do our utmost to ensure that the congregation is involved and understands where we are in the process as we move ahead.

Coordinating Team: Terry Davies Nancy Hart Rev. Karen Hilfman Millson Rev. James Ravenscroft Joanne Scofield Jane Wedlock

This week at a glance

Sunday, May 6

9:00 a.m. Finance Committee - Chapel
 10:30 a.m. Service – Sanctuary
 12:00 p.m. Youth Choir practice – Parlour
 2:00 p.m. Forest Church – Elgin West CC
 7:00 p.m. **“A Choral Retrospective”**

Monday, May 7

9:30 a.m. Shalom Seekers – Chapel
 7:00 p.m. H.A.I.R. – Chapel
 7:00 p.m. Cubs - gym

Tuesday, May 8

7:00 p.m. Tai Chi – Garden room
 7:00 p.m. Beavers – gym
 7:00 p.m. Worship Committee - Chapel

Wednesday, May 9

7:00 p.m. Council – Parlour

Thursday, May 10

6:15 p.m. Bible Study - Chapel
 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir – Parlour

Saturday, May 12

8:15 a.m. Men’s Breakfast – lower gym
 3:30 p.m. Djembe drumming –Garden Room

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Worship

Sunday, May 6: On this Anniversary Sunday, we continue reflecting on John 15. In verses 9-17, we hear Jesus inviting us to love others as he has loved us. Abiding in his love connects us to one another in time as well as space. In "Future Past" James will look to our heritage as a way of grounding who we are invited to be.

Upcoming Forest Church: On May 6 at 2 pm. A time of prayerful walking and meditation with the trees. We will gather in the parking lot of Elgin West Community Centre for an initial teaching about different trees and then take time for personal reflection. We will conclude with a sharing of refreshments.

Sunday, May 13: As we look toward Pentecost, we reflect on John 17:6-19, appreciating the gift of Jesus' continuing presence with us as a community.

Minister’s Message

What a gift it is to get away, even if it is for an intensive course. Simply being in a reflective setting like Five Oaks gives you pause, especially when you can carve out some time to go for a walk in the woods, stop to appreciate the river, savour the smell of the morning. It speaks to your soul and you feel a deep connection to the earth. You also become aware of those who walked the same trail before you. You feel the presence of our ancestors reminding us that we're connected across time as well as space. That awareness is important as we celebrate Anniversary Sunday this week. I am reminded of the presence of our ancestors as we worship in our beautiful sanctuary, gather in the hall for fellowship, wander in our neighbourhood. Their love for Christ and for Richmond Hill grounds us. We remember their dedication and feel them encouraging us in our time and place. Getting away from the day to day rhythm is also a chance to reflect on who we are right now. I am so grateful for everyone at RHUC, for our continued commitment as we have wrestled together to how we are going to live into our love for Christ and Richmond Hill. You can feel that love in everything we do. It has informed us in our discernment and will continue to be our touchstone. As we look to the future I am confident the next generations will feel our presence encouraging them on as our ancestors have encouraged us. Blessings as we celebrate our anniversary as a congregation.

Worship Notes

Planning has already begun for our summer worship services and the committee continues to meet on a monthly basis to review past services and to look ahead to the future. If you have any celebrations or concerns about worship services at RHUC, please speak to one of the members of the Worship Committee: Rev. James Ravenscroft, Barry Peters, Anne Leyton-Brown, Anne Dunn, Craig Lee, Dawn Moon, Dominick Shelton, Harry Ramsaran, Joan Verner, Linda Clark or Sandra Loughton, or call the Church Office at 905.884.1301, Ext. 5 and leave a message with our Office Administrator, Deb Fratin.

The Worship Committee has one request for volunteers at this time! If you feel you could offer your piano-playing skills and become a chime player, please speak to Kathleen Crosbie or Sandra Loughton as soon as possible. We currently have four dedicated chime players on the rotation who play the chimes for 10 minutes before the service from September to May. We are looking for one or two more "chimers". If we are successful in our search, that would mean a commitment of 10 minutes every 5 to 6 weeks. If you were to join the chime playing team, the rotation would start up again in September after Labour Day.

Sandra Loughton, Chair ~ Worship Committee

HOSPITALITY & WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Outreach Forum

When: Wed., May 23 7 pm

Where: 156 Church St.

For: All are invited but please let Lyn know if you're coming at lynniemay@gmail.com.

Truth and Reconciliation Committee

Truth and Reconciliation Committee: The Truth and Reconciliation Committees report included Calls to Action for churches. One of these requested churches to begin to educate their constituencies about the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (affectionately known as DRIPS), with the goal to ensure we are complying with the declaration. Over the course of this year, the Living in Right Relations committee will be sharing the articles in DRIPS. Once a month, the first article from a section will be read during the Worship Service. The remaining articles from the section will be included weekly in RHUC online.

Article 39

Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.

Minute for Mission *Called to be the Church*

Our gifts for Mission & Service change lives around the world. Our global partner the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCKK) is addressing the problem of severe drought by creating a conservation agriculture program. The conservation agriculture model uses mulching, crop rotation, and minimal tilling, combined with water harvesting and management, to move toward the ultimate goal: local food security. The NCKK works with Kenya's National Drought Management Agency and advises the agency of needs in drought-stricken areas. The agency then reports to the national government on areas where help is needed. The Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) is doing trials and experiments on technologies in partnership with the NCKK to determine the varieties of drought-tolerant maize and legumes that are the most suitable for growing in parts of Kenya. The NCKK/ KALRO partnership started as a result of Mission & Service support of conservation agriculture. Now they share best practices and enjoy a collaborative work relationship. Farmers appreciate the support this project has received from Mission & Service. In Tharaka Nithi County, a place characterized by perpetual food insecurity, more than 800 households have participated in the conservation agriculture project. These households "will forever be grateful to the partnership between NCKK and The United Church of Canada," says the NCKK's General Secretary Peter Karanja.

BUILDING FOR MINISTRY

MAP

“Developing ways for People in and beyond the church to contribute to Finances”

Wednesday May 16 at 7.30 in the Chapel.

Please join those who expressed an interest in trying to find solutions for our financial challenges for a session of brainstorming. We need the ideas and expertise of anyone with a vision. I am happy to help to facilitate a meeting for those with some energy around this project identified in our MAP.

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING & GROWING OUR FAITH

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be on **Saturday, May 12, 2018**. Coffee and tea will be served at 8:15am, with breakfast in the gym at 8:30 prepared by our UCW friends. After breakfast we will enjoy a round table talk about our early school years. David Leyton-Brown, James Ravenscroft and Percy Surti will share under the moderation of Wilhelm Bleek memories of the places, the teachers, the friends, the subjects and the long lasting impacts of this first phase of the formal education. All are welcome!

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 the UCW. Please RSVP to Harry Ramsaran (hramsaran@rogers.com or 905 508 4758) by Thursday, May 10. Thank you!

Looking ahead: Future dates for 2018 are September 8, October 13, November 10, and December 8.

RHUC Book club

For the second year in a row, the RHUC Book Club will be taking part in the One Book/One Aurora (OBOA) Program offered through the Aurora Public Library. Please join us on **Wednesday, May 30th at 7 p.m.** in the Chapel to discuss the OBOA book for 2018: ***Strangers with the Same Dream*** by Toronto author Alison Pick.

A "Meet the Author" event is scheduled for Saturday, November 3rd at the Aurora Library and tickets can be booked online through the library starting August 1st. Here is a short synopsis of the book: "This beautifully written, shocking and timely novel whisks us back to 1921, when a band of young Jewish pioneers set out to realize a dream: the founding of a settlement on a patch of land that would, twenty-five years later, become Israel."

For more information about the book club, please speak to Sandra Loughton or call the church office at 905.884.1301 Ext. 5.

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.

United Church Women

UCW Bus Trip is ready for boarding! **Wed. June 13th, 2018 Cost: \$60.00** (including gratuities). Please meet Elgin Barrow Arena Parking Lot **by 8:15 Leaving at 8:30 a.m.** Return: 5:30 - 6:00 p.m

We will visit the **Whetung Ojibwa Centre** at Curve Lake, **Lunch with a UCW group** in Peterborough, a stop at the famous **Peterborough Lift Locks** and visit the **Canadian Canoe Museum and Gift Shop**.

H.A.I.R.

The Monday evening study group is discussing the book **THE GOD WE NEVER KNEW** by Marcus Borg on Mondays from 7:00-8:30 in the chapel. Borg famously asked people who said they doubted the existence of God to tell him about the God they did not believe in, because chances are he did not believe in that kind of God either. In this book Borg reviews various understandings of God, and offers his interpretation of a way to reconcile faith in God with science, history, critical thought and reason. Please join us.

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Joanne Scofield, Coordinator, Sunday Morning Programmes for Youth

Irene Bazos, Coordinator, Sunday Morning Programmes for Children

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Bible Study

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. See you in the chapel!

Shalom Seekers

Please join us on **Monday, May 7** from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Chapel. This week we will be discussing two chapters from DAYS OF AWE AND WONDER: How to be a Christian in the 21st Century by Marcus Borg. For this week please read **Chapter 7 Is Jesus God? and Chapter 8 Taking Jesus Seriously**. This is an excellent way to kick-start your week.

New members are always welcome to try us out! Please speak to facilitators Dawn Moon, Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton for more information.

CREATING AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

Spring Concert – May 6 @ 7:00 p.m.

“A Choral Retrospective” – favourite anthems old and new!

When: **Sunday, May 6, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.**

Who: RHUC Chancel Choir Accompanist: Stillman Matheson Music Director: Barry Peters

Tickets: Seniors: \$15 Students (13-19): \$15 Adults - \$20 Child (6-12): \$7.50

Children under 6: Free Family (2 Adults/2 children (6-12)) - \$50

Tickets available from the Chancel Choir, church office and <https://richmondhill.snapd.com/events/view/1146148> and at the door!

RHUC Golf Tournament



The 20th annual RHUC golf fun day is **Saturday, May 26** at Bathurst Glen GC with tee times [starting at noon](#). Same scramble format as the last couple of decades and just a fun day! Anyone can win and skill is not a requirement - smile! All participants WILL have fun....

The cost is an astonishing \$55 per person including a BBQ and friendly banter after the golf. We have spots for 24 players so please sign up early.

To sign up, please let George Moon know you are coming at georgecmoon@gmail.com or in person.

Support for fundraiser

I'm taking action in the fight against cancer by fundraising for the Canadian Cancer Society. On May 13th I will be donating my hair along with my cousin. With nearly 1 in 2 Canadians expected to be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, I'm determined to make a difference any way that I can. And I hope I can count on your support! By donating to my fundraiser, you will help fund life-saving research, much-needed support services for patients and their families, and other important work that could change lives. Simply click the link below to view my personal fundraising page and make a donation online. Or visit www.cancer.ca/fundraise, click on donate, and search for Ryan Miller

Thank you so much for supporting me in the fight against cancer! *Ryan Miller*

Music Workshop

"Trends in Christian Music in the GTA: A workshop on discovery and diversity. We are people from around the globe, how does music shape who we are today?"

Sunday, May 6, 2- 4 p.m. With Dr. Swee Hong Lim, from Emmanuel College. Thornhill United Church, 25 Elgin St. Freewill offering.

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