

## Our Virtual Home, Jane Ridout

I have been reading about the history of Richmond Hill United Church. I learned that the original church building we now call our historical sanctuary was built when the original building burned down. It was so important to the members of the congregation that they raised \$17,000, which was then 25 times the annual givings of the congregation. When Sunday school attendance exploded in the 1950's the congregation again rose to the challenge. They demolished the small building to the north of the sanctuary and contributed time, talent and treasure. The able bodied in the congregation dug the foundations for what some of us now call the Christian Development Building and some the Village Commons, or made lunch for those that were digging. And everyone, whether they were one of the diggers, or one of the lunch makers, or someone who just cheered them on from the sidelines, donated the money needed to buy the land and build the building, which was almost \$250,000, again a sum many times more than the annual givings of the congregation.

As you all know, when you walk in the front door of the Church you walk by the cornerstone that says 1880, the year they started building the sanctuary. I was born the year they laid the cornerstone for the Christian Development Building.

So if you're part of my generation, you were too young to be asked to contribute to either of the original buildings. There's a programme coming via Zoom shortly, open to anyone who wants to participate called "The Church has left the Building". It focuses on *how will we combine online and in-person church*. I think those of us who consider ourselves members of the congregation of Richmond Hill United Church are being called on to build our wing of the church. **There is no cornerstone because ours is a virtual wing.**

25 times the annual givings of RHUC in 2020 would be more than eight million dollars. The Boosting Our Signal Campaign sets out a virtual structure that will cost \$82,000, or one one hundredth of that. I have no doubt that this congregation also has the financial wherewithal to raise that money.

At this time 37 households, including mine, have contributed to Boosting Our Signal, which has allowed us to build the foundation for our virtual structure. That means many of the people reading this have not.

Here are the gifts received so far:

<i>Range</i>	<i># of Households</i>	<i>Total Received</i>
More than \$2,000	2	\$ 9,000
\$1,000 to \$2,000	8	10,040
\$400-\$500	6	2,900
\$150 to \$250	5	998
\$100 or less	16	1,262
Total received	37	\$ 24,200

I want to thank those of you who have built the foundation that has allowed us to deliver on-line church with your donations so far. To secure the future of our church we will need to be able to invite people into our congregation through our virtual building, as well as welcoming them into the physical spaces envisioned and created and paid for by earlier generations. Our virtual building is not yet complete. If you have not yet supported the AV project I hope that you find yourself in a position to contribute and that we will be able to complete our installation of the system and our generation's legacy to the congregation of Richmond Hill United Church.