



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](#).

If you ever find you're encountering issues using Zoom on Sunday you can always visit <https://status.zoom.us/> to check the site status. 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 Hymns](#). For Virtual Sunday School from 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. contact Jeffrey Dale, Youth Ministries at jdale@united-church.ca.

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. 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.

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: Last week I wrote about two binaries, the "us-them" binary that seems to dominate so much of discourse right now, and the "me-everyone else" binary that also seems to motivate so much of what people choose to do. The reality is that they feed into each other. I was struck by this yesterday when I left the church following meditation. One of the new protocols we have implemented is the use of designated doors for groups to enter and exit to avoid cross-traffic. Because I left via the Yonge Street door I discovered that the "Black Lives Matter" signs had been pulled up by someone and tossed behind the shrubs. I scratched my head as to why someone would do that but then it struck me how much of our individual identity is tied up with the "tribe" we perceive ourselves to be part of. So rather than shrug off the signs as a sentiment they disagreed with, the person instead reacted as if they were personally being attacked. It is why some people react to "Black Lives Matter" with an "All Lives Matter" - because they hear an "only" added in front of the phrase and so feel that the person saying "Black Lives Matter" is actually saying their life doesn't. Or fret over same gender marriage as if it impacts their relationship with their spouse. We easily interpret another body of people being accorded simple dignity and respect as if we're losing something personally, almost as if "our" group is being targeted. None of it is logical. It is very emotion driven. The interplay between individualism and "tribal" politics thus makes group conflicts difficult to resolve. I think of this as next week is *Kairos* sponsored "World Week for Peace in Israel and Palestine". I pray that peace will come one day, but despair at times. Israelis and Palestinians each feel a strong connection to their "tribe". Jews around the world understandably pray "never again". Questioning the State of Israel can feel like an attack on a family member who survived the Holocaust, can feel like a personal attack as well. Palestinians call their displacement from the territory that became Israel the *Nakba*, the disaster. Regardless of the actual history, a retelling of the story in such emotionally charged language again leaves you feeling under personal attack. Like what I shared last week, the solution is again personal. We only change our narrative about one another when we get to know each other personally. Someone may bristle at gay marriage but not at two friends exchanging vows, or be supportive of carding until someone they care about is racially profiled. It feels like there may never be peace in the Holy Land, but there are schools, women's groups, other organizations that are intentionally bringing Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs together to get to know each other. Peace will be born in those friendships. We have the capacity to do very aggressive things when we feel under attack, but we also have the capacity to reach out in love. No wonder Jesus brought disparate people together as disciples. He understood the importance of breaking down defenses and cultivating community instead. May we do the same.

Let's Double Down: As noted in the "Minister's Message", someone removed the signs in front of the church that condemn anti-Black racism. Let's double down and double, triple, septuple the number of signs in support of Black lives and challenging systemic racism and other forms of oppression. If you can, go get a corrugated plastic sign (with holder), write a slogan on it and put it in the church flower beds along Yonge St. We won't stop showing our love, solidarity and commitment to a more just world.

worship and music

September 13: We continue our look at churchy words, looking at Matthew 18:21-28 as we ponder the role that forgiveness plays in the Christian life. We can't talk about forgiveness without some exploration of the word "sin". The second reading is "All Night" from Lisel Mueller.

September 20: We conclude our series with a good look at Matthew 20:1-16. The parable of the workers hired at various stages of the day is James' entry into the meaning of salvation.

September 27: We celebrate our first Ember Day of the year as we give thanks for creation. We also hope to reopen for in-person worship (with continuing access on Zoom).

A Familiar Face in a New Role: We are pleased to announce that Julia Ye will be joining the ministry team at RHUC from September through to April for her ministry internship. For the last few years Julia has been studying theology and the practice of ministry at Tyndale University. Julia's particular interest is in intercultural ministry. Welcome aboard Julia!

Worship Notes: Last week we talked about the sacrament of communion as we reopen. This week we are looking at Baptism. Given that avoiding contact completely is very difficult, our best practice will be to keep contact to a minimum. So, unlike our present custom where the minister holds a baby that is being baptized, for now one of the parents will hold the baby while the minister pours the water. In addition, the laying on of hands that is traditionally part of the ceremony will be optional, including a prayer for the Holy Spirit without contact. Everyone wears masks. The same principles apply when adults are being baptized.

Plans for re-opening – Phase 1: As I shared in an earlier message, the end of summer is a transition time. Schools are preparing to reopen and so are we. Given all the details we are hearing on the news about school plans, more than a few have asked me about what our plans are. Over the summer, our Transition Team has been working diligently to make sure that not only are congregants safe as the buildings are reopened but so are tenants and members of the wider community.

The first phase of our reopening is focused on the CD Building, now being called the Village Commons @RHUC. This is an important space not just for us as a congregation, but it is also home to a

number of community groups and long-term tenants. New Life Church, Bravo!, Astrum Academy, ESL Classes, Great Big Theatre Company, and more, are all getting ready to come back after Labour Day. To make sure they do so safely, we are asking them to sign onto our newly developed protocols. We are all familiar with most of them from shopping, going to work, eating out - maintaining 2 m physical distance, wearing a mask or other face covering, washing or sanitizing our hands frequently, etc.

We are also designating doors for various groups to enter and exit to ensure we don't have groups of people bumping into one another.

We are placing limits on numbers of people in the rooms. Groups are also asked to make sure their "clients" register and give contact information.

We are asking everyone who a part of a small group, committee and other body at RHUC to do the same. Please follow the instructions of your group leader, committee chair, etc. Heaven forbid anyone gets sick, but if they do, we need to let public health know who was in the church building at the time.

We are also staggering the schedule of groups and giving time between them to make sure we can do a thorough room clean between bookings.

Washrooms have been reduced to single person occupancy to help reduce contact. We can't have Dan go in and clean between every "visit", so we are asking everyone to do their part and sanitize the stall before and after each use. We are also closing the washrooms every 2 hours to allow for a thorough cleaning.

Many of us are used to just dropping into the church. To keep everyone safe, please let Deb know before you come, as the door off the parking lot will be kept locked. Deb will be in the office on Monday and Tuesday.

As ministry personnel and staff, we are responsible to keep track not just who was in the buildings but where and when. When we first closed the church buildings we emphasized that we were doing so not just to follow government requirements but because we are a caring and compassionate community. That understanding of ourselves must inform what we do as we come back to the Village Commons, and when we resume in-person worship. more on that next week.

Reopening Part 2: While cognizant that transmission rates may change, we plan to reopen for in-person worship on September 27. People are asked to register on Eventbrite or by leaving a voicemail in order to keep a cap on numbers. We can only host a maximum of 75 people using main floor and balcony. As part of registration everyone is asked screening questions and asked about them once again at the door. Household groups are to enter the church while maintaining physical distance and to do the same while seated. Everyone is to wear masks. Because of restrictions around contact,

there are no orders of service. Collection is not taken by passing the plate. Instead, envelopes are placed in a collection box as people exit. To avoid cross-traffic, everyone follows one direction, entering via the north aisle and exit via the south aisle. Unfortunately, congregational singing is considered risky so we will only have live singing by small groups that are socially distanced and otherwise only play pre-recorded hymns and other songs. In-person worship does not replace livestreaming. We will still broadcast the service on Zoom and then post the recordings on Facebook and YouTube.

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 (mailed in or mail slot on Centre. St. door) 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,

Canada Helps,

<http://www.rhuc.org/donate.html>, or post-dated cheques to the Church, 10201 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, L4C 3B2.



church news

I have been the Office Administrator for 20 years at RHUC. Where has the time gone? I have loved coming into work from the very beginning and that hasn't changed. The support from our amazing staff and wonderful volunteers also hasn't changed! Thank you !!!
Deb

Archives: Are you interested in our church history? A volunteer to look after our archives is needed. Contact Deb in church office.

programs for all

Women's Spirituality: Women's Spirituality will meet this **Saturday September 12th at 10:00** at the gate to the Peace Park at the Vishnu Mandir Hindu Temple. The Temple is on the west side of Yonge Street, just before the turn-off to Hwy. #7, with ample parking. We will walk around this area and look at the monuments, words and beauty of this garden setting, a gift to the community from the Temple members. After the silent walk, we will gather to share our experience of this meaningful and moving place. If the weather is not conducive to being outside, we will meet at the Church. Please let Donna Smith, 905-884-6307, know if you plan to attend.

Shalom Seekers: Shalom Seekers will be meeting **this Monday, September 14th, at 10 a.m.** at Amos Wright Park on Church Street (formerly Dora Lamb's garden). Please bring your own folding chair and your coffee or tea. If it rains, we will meet on Zoom as before. Sandra or Peg will contact people by e-mail on Sunday evening after checking the weather forecast for Monday morning. If you don't have a folding chair, please let us know and we will bring an extra one for you. Newcomers are always welcome. If interested in joining us, please contact Sandra Loughton or Peg Hiscoke.

Zoom Coffee Time: Thursday Zoom Coffee Time is at 10:30 a.m. weekly. Contact Deb for info.

RHUC Book Club: Please join us on Zoom by video or phone on **Wednesday, September 23rd** (the 4th Wednesday) at 4 p.m. to discuss **A Man Called Ove** by Swedish writer Fredrik Backman. We have a book club set of 15 books from the library. Existing members will receive an invitation e-mail prior to the meeting, but new members are always welcome to join the club. Please contact me at bookgirl8@hotmail.com for more information. *Sandra Loughton*

Weekly Meditation: Weekly meditation is Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 7:15 in the Chapel with social distancing and please wear a mask.

Pub Theology: We meet online once again to discuss faith, spirituality and life's big questions. The next online gathering is on **Fri., Sept. 25 at 7:30 PM.**

Celebrating the Autumnal Equinox: On Sunday, September 20, Three Rivers Forest Church will host a meditation walk and celebration of harvest. Meet at 19 Church St. S. at 3 pm. Be sure to wear a mask and bring your own refreshments.

Centring Prayer Workshop: Have you been feeling stressed and thought that meditation may be of help? Have you heard James preach about prayer and contemplation, and want to learn more? Are you curious about the tradition of Centring Prayer? Then mark down **Saturday, September 26 from 1 - 5 pm** on your calendar. Sue Woolard and Mary Catherine Doyle from Contemplative Outreach Ontario will be offering a Zoom based workshop on Centring Prayer. Email James (james@rhuc.org) for more information.



outreach

Jubilee: New Hope for our Planet: An online free event on **Sunday September 27th from 3:00-4:30** to celebrate the beauty and wonders of planet earth, to lament the destruction that has become a serious threat, creating Climate Change Emergencies world-wide; and to find New Hope for our Planet. This is our Common Home, let's come together to discuss what we can do individually and collectively to protect and care for our planet. The Covid 19 may have constrained us but it has also awakened in us the need and potential to care for our earth. This event is organized by Richmond Hill United Church, St. Mary's Anglican Church and Neighbours for the Planet.

Visit neighboursfortheplanet.ca

for more information and to register through

Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/jubilee-new-hope-for-our-planet-tickets-119333956075>



**JUBILEE:
NEW HOPE FOR
OUR PLANET**

Date: Sun Sept. 27, 3-4:30pm

For more details visit the Events page on neighboursfortheplanet.ca

Join us for an afternoon of Information and Discussion on Caring for our Planet Earth as we recover from Covid 19



Minute for Mission: Our gifts for Mission & Service support the important work of reconciliation with Indigenous members of The United Church of Canada. One of the programs Mission & Service supports is the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering. Many

Indigenous members met on the territory of the Chippewas of Rama near Orillia, Ontario, in August 2019 to discern and decide on the structure and priorities for the selfdetermining Indigenous church within the United Church. This fourth National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering provided opportunities for listening to and discerning the Creator's plan, visioning, spiritual nurture, mutual accountability, inspiration, education, youth development, and expressing the voice of the Indigenous community on spirituality and ministry. Using the Biidaabin* ("first light of a new day") process of education, reflection and discussion, discernment, and decision-making, participants created and named a new national Indigenous church organization, elected a new National Indigenous Council, appointed a National Elders Council, and set priorities for the next triennium. The National Indigenous Council is an intergenerational group that includes two youth leaders. As the planning team declared in its vision statement, the gathering would "inform, transform, and manifest healing and vitality. This is our act of decolonizing." This vision and the decisions made at the gathering will help the Indigenous church to speak with a strong voice as its members continue to live into right relations.

On **September 30**, people all across Canada will wear orange shirts to remember and honour Indigenous children who attended Residential Schools. Indigenous Ministries and Justice at The United Church of Canada asks you to participate in Orange Shirt Day!

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.