



Though we were looking forward to seeing everyone, we have decided to delay reopening for in-person worship that was rescheduled for Sunday, September 27. This is necessary to give enough time to resolve some technical issues. We want worship to be a good experience for everyone, both for those coming to the church and for those joining from home. We will announce the official date as soon as we can.

We will continue to livestream Sunday service 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: [Order of Service Hymns](#)

We understand that this is a strange time, but we will get through it together. Whether you are choosing to stay home or to worship in-person, we are still one community, committed to care for one another with compassion and love.

Minister's Message: We pride ourselves in Canada on having a comprehensive "Charter of Rights and Freedoms". We are protected from discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. This charter section has been interpreted to mean that people are also protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. We are right to be proud of these protections. We also take them for granted along with protections for the press, speech, peaceful assembly. Because we are free to practice our religious beliefs, we were able to celebrate the baptisms of three adults and one child this past Sunday. Because most often we baptise babies, we do not really think about the significance of an adult choosing to be baptised. It is a significant moment in their spiritual lives. They are not just choosing to join the church community but are making a commitment to follow Christ, trusting that with baptism their past failings are forgiven and they can rely on the transforming reality of grace in the Holy Spirit. It is a big deal. And for some it is bigger still, because they are choosing to leave the faith of their childhood in order to become Christian. We assume in Canada that anyone can make that choice but there are many parts of the world where it is forbidden to change your religion, to be found out your could be arrested, even killed, and if not you, your family may be at risk. It is hard for us to imagine. Even just owning a Bible is risky let alone being baptised. We are so lucky to have the right to make our own faith decisions in Canada, and to be a place where people who do not have that right can also come to live. As we give thanks for this freedom, may we also pray for those who are persecuted in other parts of the world because of their sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender identity and expression, and for their faith.

worship and music

Sunday, September 27: Contrary to previous announcements, this Sunday will not be our official reopening for in-person worship. It will still be, however, the First Ember Day of our "program year" as we take time to give thanks for the natural world and consider the importance of protecting this important gift that provides for us. We will reflect on Psalm 19:1-8 as well as the Mohawk legend of the Sky Woman.

Sunday, October 4: We reflect on Matthew 21:23-32 as Jesus is confronted by the chief priests and elders about the nature of his mission. We also celebrate World-wide communion Sunday. Should we be able to go ahead with our plans to reopen, those coming in-person are reminded to BYOC (bring your own bread and wine for communion).

Sunday, October 11: As we celebrate Thanksgiving Sunday, the passage in Matthew 6:25-33 about taking on the attitude of trust of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field is felt in a much more poignant way this year. Can we give thanks in the middle of a pandemic, and if so in what way?

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.



Worship Notes: As we celebrate the Autumnal Equinox, it is once again time to pause in our regular liturgical rhythm and mark the first of this "program year's" Ember Days. Based on an older practice of marking the seasons with prayer and reflection, we pause four times a year to give thanks for creation, to take time to lament our responsibility in the harm being done to the environment, and to discern ways in which we can be better stewards of our planet home. We have chosen to focus on praise for the Ember Day each autumn. With harvest upon us, how can we not pause to give thanks and sing songs of praise. The winter Ember Day will be more focused on lament. It will be celebrated either at the end of December or in early January.

church news

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

Keeping up your spirits

Keeping up your spirits will be discontinued, but if you come across something interesting, please let us know.

From Lynne Saul – a sign at a church: Hygenesis 20:20 Thou Shalt wear a mask.

programs for all

Pub Theology: A reminder that this **Friday (September 25)** is RHUC's regular "Pub Theology" evening, an opportunity to talk about faith, spirituality and life's other big questions. We once again meet online via Zoom. One possible topic for discussion is "The Merits and Questions regarding Veganism". Contact the office for access to the Zoom Link.

Shalom Seekers: We are planning to meet outside again on **Monday, September 28 at 10 a.m.** if the weather cooperates. If not, we will send an e-mail advising that we'll be meeting on Zoom. We will be meeting at the same place - Amos Wright Park, Dora Lamb's former garden. Please bring a folding chair, a blanket if needed, and your coffee or tea.

We may also be distributing our new book that day, so if you are able, please bring \$19. The book is *HOLY ENVY: Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor.

For more information about the group, please contact Peg Hiscoke or Sandra Loughton. New members are always warmly welcomed. We plan to continue meeting on Zoom for the fall until we can meet again in person.

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

RHUC Book Club: Please join the RHUC Book Club on Wednesday, October 28th at 4 p.m. to discuss the novel *FIVE LITTLE INDIANS* by Michelle Good. This new novel is on the Scotiabank Giller Prize longlist for November 2020. "*Five Little Indians* is a heartbreaking and uplifting story about the lives of five kids who are taken and placed in a church-run residential school." (The Vancouver Sun).

Michelle Good is a writer of Cree ancestry and a member of the Red Pheasant Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. She obtained her law degree after three decades of working with indigenous communities and organizations.

This may not be an easy read, but it seems like the perfect time for such a story. New members are always welcome to join us on Zoom. For more information, please speak to Sandra Loughton, Book Club Facilitator. An invitation for the Zoom meeting will be sent out on October 27th.

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.

Not too late to register! Let James know if you would like to participate in the workshop.

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>

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!

This message is for all music directors, musicians and music enthusiasts throughout Shining Waters Regional Council

We invite you into a time of conversation and contemplation around our shared music ministry. Throughout the region we have seen varying ways in which music is being engaged in our communities of faith. I want to invite each of you to attend conversations that will be happening throughout the region around music in communities of faith. Our first conversations will be focused on: getting to know one another and our needs during this time. Each meeting will only be an hour in length, and we will adhere to that time frame for people's schedules. There will be three dates and times for conversation, if one of these dates or times fit into your schedule it would be great to see you.

The following dates/times are:

1. Tuesday, September 29th – 7 pm – 8 pm

Zoom Link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/92559187895>

2. Wednesday, September 30th – 7 pm – 8 pm

Zoom Link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/98135329683>

To register, please contact me, Jeffrey Dale, at jdale@united-church.ca to let us know that you are planning on attending.



Minute for Mission: Our Mission & Service grants for community ministries like Bissell Centre's Outreach Housing Team offers hope for a safer, more prosperous future to many people like Joe. Joe had been living on the streets when he first moved to Edmonton to be closer to his children. His first visit to Bissell Centre was for a shower and clean clothing. Afterward, he found a group of people sleeping under a gazebo together, using an electric blanket covered by a tarp to keep warm at night. "We slept under there, huddled together, just hoping to wake up in the morning," he said. But after being robbed and left to freeze one night, Joe needed to make a change. Bissell Centre's support workers helped him find an affordable apartment and piece his life back together. "There were some nights when I wasn't sure if I'd survive. If it wasn't for Bissell Centre, I'd probably have frozen out there," he says. "But now, I'm okay. I have my kids and family back, and I have a lot of support. And I have a beautiful home to call my own." He has a job, and he volunteers at the Centre to give back to the community. None of this would have been possible without Mission & Service. With additional support from Gifts with Vision, over 45 people housed through Bissell Centre's Outreach Housing Team were given a gift when they moved into new housing last year; items such as pots and pans, utensils, and linens made them feel more at home. Funds were also used to purchase bus tickets to help people get to apartment viewings, secure new identification, or obtain a criminal record check.



WALKING UP



MOUNTAINS

A VIRTUAL WALK FOR AFRICAN AIDS

Mid-Oct. To Dec 1st

Have you ever walked up a mountain? A small contingent from our Hands and Hearts for Africa Walking Team are lacing up our shoes to do just that! New volunteers are welcome to join us!

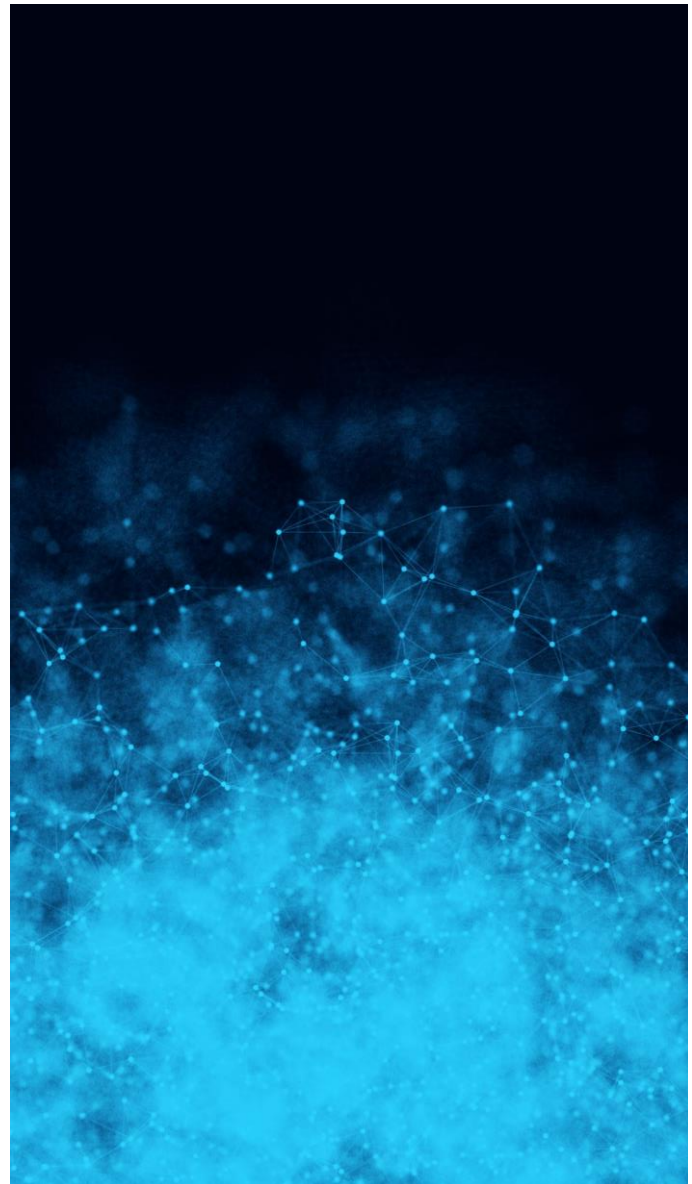
Our Challenge? To start with, we have chosen to walk up Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain, beginning our virtual walk on Thanksgiving Weekend. Once we reach the Kibo summit and return to base, there will be other mountains to climb. How many summits can we reach before completion of this challenge on December 1st, World AIDS Day?

Why are we doing this? We are walking to support African grandmothers dealing with the double challenge of AIDS and Covid 19. If you wish to support grassroots programmes that bring better health and empowerment to African families, please support the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Donations can be made directly online at www.stephenlewisfoundation.org or by cheque to The Stephen Lewis Foundation, 260 Spadina Avenue, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario, M5T2E4. Please include a note on the donation page online or on your cheque that you are supporting the "2020 Hands and Hearts for Africa Virtual Walk."

Our First Mountain Kilimanjaro is the tallest free-standing mountain in the world. It is 19,341 feet high or 5895 meters and is part of the Eastern Rift Mountains in Tanzania. Its name comes from a KiChagga word meaning 'white mountain' but sadly the ice caps and glaciers are melting. This mountain is unusual because it has 3 volcanic cones. Of these, the tallest peak is Kibo, a dormant volcano.

A safe climb, the mountain welcomes 50,000 climbers every year and 65% make it to the top. Most successful climbs allow for acclimatisation at different altitudes and take 7-9 days to prevent altitude sickness. There are at least 6 routes to the summit of Kilimanjaro and our team will combine efforts to climb all 6 routes this fall. According to experts, October is the best time to attempt the climb. Total walking distance is 662 kms or 410 miles from base to summit and back again.

For more information about the Stephen Lewis Foundation's work or to join our walking team, please contact Donna Harrison or Peg Hiscoke at handsandhearts@live.ca.



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