



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](mailto: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](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:** As we watch the news, especially coverage of the US, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the prevalence of an us-them narrative. There are many at play. Political, racial, socio-economic, geographical and cultural divisions are all at play. But as I consider all of these us-them couplets I am struck that there is a bigger binary at play. Me versus everyone. What I mean by this is the struggle between individual and collective rights and responsibilities. Take for example the issue of wearing a mask. While it hasn't become a political issue, it is a point of tension. We may not adhere to the American myth of Rugged Individualism but the court case being heard in Newfoundland about travel restrictions is a reminder that we are not all singing a communal kumbaya. There is a point at which many of us start to push back against community needs. We see this when business owners refuse to provide a service, say to bake a cake for a same-gender wedding, with the claim their religious rights are being infringed. As the pandemic continues we are seeing more and more of this me-everyone binary and increasingly the me side of the equation is winning. Hence an uptick of cases of COVID-19. SARS-COV 2 is going to be with us for some time to come so what are we to do? For me, the key is restoring some balance in the binary by making sure I take time for self care. I may feel increasingly impinged by the collective needs of family and so end up asserting my Individual rights in the public realm, pushing past someone in a store, not wearing a mask. But that puts others at risk. Instead I need to reverse it, to take more time for myself at home in order to be more willing to give way to collective needs in the wider community. Jesus invites us to love others and to love ourselves. We may tend to emphasise others but sometimes loving myself is a way to ensure I truly love my neighbour.

## worship and music

**September 6:** We return to Matthew 16, this time reflecting on verses 21-26. Having affirmed his belief that Jesus is the Christ, Peter argues with Jesus about what that means. We often want to take Peter's side. After all Jesus speaks not just about his own suffering and death on the cross but how we are called to carry our cross as well. This part of the story invites us to consider the meaning of suffering and sacrifice in the life of Jesus, and in our own.

**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".

**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:** Sacraments are an important part of our worship life but how do we celebrate baptism and communion in the time of COVID-19? For many denominations, neither baptisms nor communion have been celebrated. Baptism is understandable because of the need for water to be poured on to the one being baptised. For communion, many denominations assert that the minister/priest and congregants must be in the same gathering for the bread and juice/wine to be an experience of spiritual nourishment. In the United Church we have been more creative in our interpretation, affirming that a virtual gathering is still a gathering of the church. Hence our online communion services for Easter and Pentecost. One condition is that communion is only to be shared during the livestreaming of the service and not while watching a recorded version. What about when some people are in-person and others at home? Does this principle still hold? Yes. and so assuming we will once again be gathering in-person (as well as on Zoom) on October 4, we will celebrate communion both in-person and at home. More details to follow closer to the date. Next week, thoughts on baptism.

**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.

**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.



## church news

Congratulations to **Matthew Miller** with the score of 83 on his grade 10 Royal Conservative piano exam!

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



### 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)

**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

**Drivers:** Heather Hartung, Marise Blanchette, Amy Hammer, Gaye Spence, Nancy Coxford, Doug Loweth

## programs for all

**Shalom Seekers** We are taking a break next week and there will be no Zoom meeting on the holiday Mon., Sept 7. However, we will be meeting the following week **Sept 14 at 10 am 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. 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](mailto: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.

**Three Rivers Forest Church:** For our September gathering, we will meet on the **third Sunday, Sept. 20th, at 3:00 pm** in James' backyard. This date is closer to the Fall Equinox on the 21st which will inform our thoughts, words and experience.

**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.**

## 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. 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.**

This is a link for a podcast conversation between Baratunde Thurston and Valerie Kaur. She was the author we heard from on Sunday. She wrote *See No Stranger*.

[How To Citizen with Baratunde] Prelude: Revolutionary Love is How to Citizen (with Valerie Kaur) #howToCitizenWithBaratunde <https://podcastaddict.com/episode/111667965> via @PodcastAddict

Submitted by Lynne Saul: 'It's apparently an eye witness account from New York City, on a cold day in December, some years ago':

A little boy, about 10-years-old, was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold. A lady approached the young boy and said, "My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window!"

"I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes," was the boy's reply.

The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her. She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes.

She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, "No doubt, you will be more comfortable now.

As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her. "Are you God's wife?"

**An Interesting Read about Masks:** Many of you have at least heard of, if not read a book or two by author and church historian, Diana Butler-Bass. Dr. Butler-Bass sends out a twice-weekly email reflection called "The Cottage". James highly recommends subscribing. Her words are always inspiring, thought-provoking, insightful. Recently, "The Cottage" included a challenging piece that can also be read in "Spirituality and Health" about wearing masks. While it is an American inspired article, we have some of the same debate here in Canada. Dr. Butler-Bass explores some of the issues that underlie some of the misgivings so many feel about covering our faces - even when the health of everyone depends on it. here is the link:

<https://spiritualityhealth.com/articles/2020/09/02/great-mask-debate>

## outreach

**Jubilee: New Hope for our Planet:** An online free event on **Sunday September 27<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://neighboursfortheplanet.ca)

NEIGHBOURS FOR THE PLANET

Neighbours for the Planet  
NftP & Faith Communities celebrating Season of Creation 2020

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



**Minute for Mission:** Last week's Minute for Mission was about Rendez-Vous, the triennial gathering of Youth and Young Adults sponsored by the United Church. It spoke of busloads of participants coming together in Calgary. Unless busloads is a new way of speaking about people logging in online, the piece was written before we all needed to picot because of COVID-19. That's publisher deadlines for you. If you want to know what really happened, read what follows from Ian Wilgus. Ian attended the pandemic-pivoted Rendez-Vous: 'I had the great privilege of attending Rendez Vous 2020! It will certainly be one to remember.

While the original plan had been to host the event in Calgary at the University, the event had to be reimagined for this new and strange time. We all quickly saw the tremendous potential of the online event, which became far more accessible both financially and physically. There was even an attendee from France!

At the event, we attended workshops, worship and presentations which challenged us, and inspired us. The themes of the event were: Bold Faith, Brave Space, Brazen Grace, and Faith Gone Wild. I have come away from the event with learnings on each of these themes. We each learned how to boldly work for change to achieve a more just world for us and future generations. For me, the daily Elder Teachings, the presentation on Brave Space, and the workshop on how to be anti-racist were particularly enlightening.

I owe a great debt of gratitude for the team of organizers, and of course to everyone who donates to the Mission and Service Fund, both of which made this event possible.'

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](mailto:office@rhuc.org), and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Published by Deb Fratin. Please submit notices by noon on Wednesday.