



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Announcements and Information that might be of interest the people of the Northern Spirit Region. If you have news to share or information about an upcoming event, please send it to Kathy Jackson, Administrative Support: kjackson@united-church.ca, or post it to the Community of Faith Events Newsfeed: <https://northernspiritlead.ca/add-your-community-event/>

Attention Ministry Personnel

An important message from the Office of Vocation will be coming to you tomorrow, Wednesday, June 3. Please be on the lookout for an email from Kathy Jackson, on behalf of Karen Medland, OV Minister. If you do not receive the email, please contact the Regional Office.

United Church of Canada COVID-19 Updates

Re-Opening Discernment and Practices

An important [three-part resource](#) on "re-opening" discernment and practices has been developed by leaders who are thinking carefully about the many practical, spiritual, and ethical complexities of these decisions. As always, we are expected to keep ourselves up to date on provincial, territorial, and local health authority updates and restrictions when making decisions. Please also see [Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy's letter](#) on this important conversation.

It is expected that information at this link will continue to be updated, and the date on the page will change to reflect this. The link itself will remain the same. Please share it widely. Here it is again: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/reopening-churches-during-covid-19>

Congregational Finances during the Pandemic

Wednesday's now-famous webinars about congregational finances during the pandemic are on hold until more updates become necessary. All of you hard working Treasurers: please take a break!

Congregational Programming during the Pandemic

During the pandemic, United-in-Learning is offering a weekly series for ministers and church leaders, with just-in-time skills and reflections intended to help us all respond to the unusual situation we find ourselves in. If you have specific requests or suggestions for future topics, please [CLICK HERE](#) to email us! [Here's full information on this weekly series.](#)

Moderator's Letter: "Seize the Moment" for a Universal Basic Income in Canada

Moderator Richard Bott is calling on the Canadian government to "seize the moment" offered by COVID-19 pandemic relief programs and to move forward with developing and implementing a Universal Basic Income (UBI) program. A UBI program would help provide an adequate living level for everyone and address the persistent inequities within our country. Here's the [article](#), the [Moderator's full letter](#), and a related [action invitation for congregations](#) from Westworth United Church in Winnipeg.

Regional Council COVID-19 Updates

Changes to Ongoing Regional Check-In and Support Meetings

The Regional Council will continue with Tuesday Ministry Personnel check-ins that are Region-specific. Please check with the Regional Council Office for further information.

Gatherings for Lay Leaders will be scheduled as the need arises. Please direct questions or ideas for topics to the Regional Council Office.

In Other News ...

The Regional Council Meeting That Wasn't ... But Will Be ...

Although the Regional Council will not meet in Camrose June 11-14, planning for the work of the meeting is still underway. Please see this [letter from Shannon McCarthy](#), Executive Minister.

The Second Annual Northern Spirit Regional Council Meeting will be held over two online gatherings: Wednesday, October 14, 7 to 9 pm (MDT), for connection, listening and discussing the business before the Regional Council; and

Wednesday, October 21, 7 to 9 pm (MDT), for decision-making.

Updates, as they occur will be included in this newsletter, and posted on the Northern Spirit web site: [Regional Council Meeting](#).

Northern Spirit Regional Worship Service on June 14

Grace United Church in Edmonton invites you to an online Regional Worship Service on Sunday, June 14, with folks throughout the Northern Spirit Region participating. This might be an opportunity to allow you to have a break from preparing your own online worship for one week. Further information and a link to join the service will be distributed on June 12th through this e-news network, and will be posted on the Regional Council web site news feed (<https://northernspiritr.ca/northern-spirit-news/>) and the Facebook group, UCCanada Northern Spirit Region 2.

Remit 1: Gender-Inclusive Language in the Basis of Union

In the fall of 2020, delegates to the Regional Council Annual Meeting will be voting on a remit to make a small but important change to the Basis of Union. Current wording about eligibility for ministry uses “men and women”, and the wording would be changed to “all people”, to reflect a diversity of gender identities. ([Further background is here](#)). The Equity and Diversity Committee of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council and various resource people will create some learning opportunities that will be open to all (See webinar invitation below, and in the Events feed on the web site.)

Webinar: Gender Diversity and the Power of Language.

Times: 5:00 PM (Pacific). 6:00 PM (AB, NWT and SK). What is gender inclusive language and how does it have the power to embrace or exclude non-binary, Two Spirit, trans, and gender queer people? Join us for a practical discussion about evolving language and personal perspectives on its importance. All welcome. This time together is especially recommended for Regional Council delegates who will be voting on Remit 1 this fall. Zoom link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/94031917505>. To join by telephone, call 1 855 703 8985 (toll-free), using Meeting ID 940 3191 7505.

Being Good Relations Network: Cluster Meetings Coming Up Next Week

The Being Good Relations Network continues its work on truth-telling, decolonization, and right relations. This includes connections with the four Indigenous Communities of Faith in Alberta's treaty

territories. To help re-gather people who share in these commitments, the Northern Spirit half of this Alberta-wide network is hosting three 90 minute gatherings the week of June 8, for the Northeast, the Northwest, and Edmonton and area. Full details will be posted on the Regional Council web site. All welcome!

Indigenous Day of Prayer: A History

June 21 is a deeply important day for many Indigenous Nations and United Church members. Here's a [short background](#) on the history of this day, now celebrated across the land.

Western Intercultural Chai and Coffee Check-in

On Tuesday, June 23, join the Western Intercultural Ministry Network with your tea, chai, coffee (or water) in hand. We'll talk about how we're all doing, and discuss the racism that COVID is bringing to light, as well as strategies for confronting it. We'll also share updates on our fall gathering, now moving online for September and October. Times: 11:30 AM (Pacific); 12:30 PM (AB, NWT, and SK); 1:30 PM (MB and NW Ontario). Gathering link: <https://united-church.zoom.us/j/97973729801>

Together We Worship Resources

The Regional Council will be changing the way that it will support congregations that are without ministry personnel, or for whom pulpit supply is hard to find or cost prohibitive. Individual Communities of Faith are asked to contact Allan Buckingham, through the Together We Worship website (<https://togetherweworship.ca/>), and purchase a monthly subscription. The Northern Spirit Regional Council fully refunding Together We Worship invoices from these Communities of Faith. Please forward invoices to Heather Dootoff, Finance Administrator (hdootoff@united-church.ca) for payment.

Worship Themes and Resources for June

In June, both Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ communities are a focus for the United Church. June 7 is [Pride Sunday](#) (as well as Church Union Sunday - the best of liturgical luck with mixing these two themes.) June 21 is National Indigenous Day and the Indigenous Day of Prayer; find [new resources for this important day here](#).

Camps: Creating Community during a Difficult Summer

As you likely know, our United Church camps are dealing with the hard reality that they will not be able to gather physically to be with the beauty of the land and the water. They're responding with creativity and care, as you can see in [this article from a national camping conversation](#). Check in with the camp closest to you to see how you can help spread the word about their needs and their summer programs.

Reminder: Put your Community Event on our Web Site!

You can still promote your local event through our website. Regular worship should be registered with the national church's map and listings, but everything from bible study to a workshop to drive-up pie or bannock fundraisers can be shared on our Communities of Faith Events Calendar through our [community form](#). The event needs to be a United Church event open to the public. Give it a try!

Education Opportunities ...

Before a little summer rest begins, check out the amazing range of online gatherings here.

Being Good Relations Cluster Check-In Meetings: see article above.

Eco Commoning

June 11, 18 and 25: 90 minute forums and discussion on ecological justice in your community of faith. [Full details are here.](#)

Sundays in June: Indigenous Heritage Month: Foundations of the Indigenous United Church

Every Sunday in June at 2:00 PM in AB, NWT and SK, come explore the foundations of the Indigenous Church in The United Church of Canada. These sessions are open to everyone to come and learn. For additional information, or to register, please contact: right.relations@hillhurstunited.com

June 7: **Foundations:** Indigenous Women's Spirituality, with Rev. Bernice Saulteaux

June 14: **Formation:** Indigeneity in Christian Formation, with the Very Reverend Stan McKay

June 21: **Indigenous People's Day/Mission:** The Indigenous Church, Mission and Call, with the Rev. John Snow Jr.

June 28: **Vision:** The Caretakers Report and the Future Indigenous Church, with Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Circle, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

Many thanks to these elders and knowledge keepers, and to the Right Relations Circle at Hillhurst United Church in Calgary, for offering us the space to learn together.

Advocacy for and with Refugees: Online Workshop Series

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is holding their 2020 Spring Consultation online from May 19 to June 26, 2020. CCR is a long time United Church partner and a well-respected education and advocacy group for the rights of people seeking refuge and their supporters. Participate in the Virtual Spring Consultation to explore current issues affecting refugee protection and newcomer settlement, featuring perspectives from all Canadian provinces and experts in diverse fields. All are welcome! For more information, please visit the CCR web site: [CCR Spring Consultation](#)

Peace Vigil for Korea

On June 25, 2020, join us for an [online prayer vigil](#) for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula, marking the 70th Anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

This special event links the United Church with the [World Council of Churches \(WCC\)](#) global prayer campaign, A Light of Peace, inspired by United Church partners in Korea. The campaign invites people of faith around the world to pray and act for peace on the Korean Peninsula and for a world free from war and nuclear weapons.

Times: 5:00 PM in BC, 6:00 PM in AB, NWT and SK.

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