



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

September 1, 2020

Announcements and Information 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://northernspiritrc.ca/add-your-community-event/>

Featured News ...

Re-Opening your Church Building: Discernment and Planning Resources

"If we assume that someone attending our in-person worship service has been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, are the precautions we are implementing enough to keep everyone else attending safe from exposure to the virus?" (Dirk Jessen)

This is a key question that Governing Bodies of Communities of Faith are urged to consider as discussions are held about re-opening buildings to worship and other gatherings and uses. We know that complex discernment and planning are necessary before any doors can be opened. Lay leaders and Ministry Personnel need to be part of these conversations. Information and advice continue to be shared and updated.

To assist, the Regional Council urges Communities of Faith to use these resources: a [Discernment Process](#), a [Planning Template](#), and a [Sample Seating Plan](#) developed at Riverbend United Church, Edmonton. For other information from the Regional Council web site, [please click here](#).

The Regional Council also urges Communities of Faith to be mindful of matters related to insurance. This page from the United Church web site has good information: [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about COVID-19 and Insurance.

Communities of Faith are asked to submit a copy of their Re-Opening Plan to the Regional Council Office: NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca.

Re-Entry to Gathered Worship in Buildings: Making Faithful Decisions in a Pandemic

The Rev. Diane Strickland, a certified Community and Workplace Traumatologist, offers a two-part video on "Making Faithful Decisions on Re-entry." [Part 1](#) addresses the questions: How do we change our assumptions and why? And how do we deepen individual and collective awareness that will allow us to move forward faithfully with grace? [Part 2](#) addresses the role of leaders in carrying forward a trauma-informed approach to re-entry decision-making and implementation, in order to bring along as many people as possible. How can we work together with individuals and the collective community of faith to find the right angle of approach for re-entering in-person worship together?

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Guidelines

The Federal, and all Provincial and Territorial Governments have provided guidance and direction regarding re-launching after the pandemic. Be sure to continue to monitor the web sites for your jurisdiction: [Health Canada](#) [Alberta](#) [British Columbia](#) [Northwest Territories](#)

Amendments to Pastoral Relations Policies

The General Council Executive has extended the temporary amendments to pastoral relations policies to December 31, 2020. For more information about the amendments that were put in place due to COVID protocols, please visit the United Church web site: [Pastoral Relationships and Employment](#).

Spam Emails from Regional Council Staff

It has come to our attention that someone is setting up email addresses (usually @gmail.com) and putting Regional Council Staff names on them. Please be sure that if you receive an email from any of the Staff, or anyone, that the email address of the sender is correct. If you are in doubt, do not respond, and contact the Regional Office to confirm whether or not the message is legitimate.

United Church Appeal for the Devastation in Lebanon

The tragic explosion in Beirut on August 4 caused immense destruction, and the death toll continues to rise. The United Church of Canada has been in contact with our Mission and Service partners in the region about how best to respond to this tragedy. Please continue to pray for the injured and those who have lost their lives, as well as the families, communities, and first responders to the disaster. You can help those affected by donating to the United Church Appeal: <https://www.united-church.ca/lebanon>

In Other News ...

Prayer Cycle for Regional Councils: September 8 for Northern Spirit

Given these uncertain and overwhelming times for our congregations and leaders, a group of church leaders from across the United Church invite you to join a facilitated half hour online time of prayer (modeled after the Prayer Room at the 43rd General Council), to pray for every Pastoral Charge by name. Prayer rooms have been happening throughout the summer. Inspired by the national Faith Formation Team, the work began June 2 with First Dawn Eastern Edge Region and is working its way to the West, hosting one prayer session per region once a week. Anyone is welcome to join in each week, but organizers make a special effort to invite those from the region for which we are praying. Nothing is required except your presence!

September 8 at 11:00 AM MDT (10:00 AM Pacific) is Northern Spirit's prayer time. Sign up here for your link: https://unitedchurch.formstack.com/forms/regional_prayer_rooms.

National Opportunities to Serve the Church

The United Church has several important openings for lay and order of ministry people in our Regional Council. In particular, the Prairie Candidacy Board is looking for people from our region. Please see the link below for information about the position, and the process for expressing interest in serving. Other opportunities include: the Healing Programs Working Group (1–3 vacancies), ;and the Justice and Reconciliation Fund Committee (2 vacancies).The nominations deadline is September 10, 2020. [More Details](#).

2021 Mission and Ministry Grants

The Regional Council Executive is already planning for its work in 2021. One of the important tasks will be to consider applications for Mission Support and Regional Council Grants to support the mission of Communities of Faith in 2021. For information about the application process, please visit the Regional Council web site: <https://northernspiritr.ca/documents-forms/funding-ministry/>. The application

deadline was August 31, but, due to the extenuating circumstances caused by the COVID pandemic, applications will still be considered if submitted by September 30, 2020.

Camp Mackinicholea History Book

Did you attend Camp Mackinicholea, near Jarvie, Alberta? The Long Island Lake Society published a history book about the camp, some time in the 1980s, and is looking for a copy. This would be a blue, soft-cover book that describes the history of the camp, decade by decade, from the 1940s onward. If you have a copy, please contact the Regional Council Archivist, Leanne Templeton, by email to: ltempleton@united-church.ca

United Church Rural Ministry Network

A new network has been formed with a focus on rural ministry. The United Church Rural Ministry Network has launched a new web site: UCRMN.ca, and has posted its first newsletter (linked to the home page). The newsletter includes some information about what is happening across Canada. You are encouraged to check it out, and if you like what you see, feel free to subscribe to receive further newsletters. A 2-hour Zoom Workshop is being planned for September 23, to help rural folks share stories about how it has been to live through COVID. Newsletter subscribers will automatically be kept up to date, and get the details for joining the Workshop.

Season of Creation Resources

September is a season of abundance that will help see us through the cold of winter. Whether we fish or hunt, farm or garden, what better time to honour the deep generosity of God and God's creation in worship and reflection? In this liturgical Season of Creation, consider centering Creation and ecological justice in your community of faith's life.

Worship Resources from the United Church: [September 13](#); [September 20](#); [September 27](#).

Ecumenical options through KAIROS, the Canadian churches' justice movement: **For the Love of Creation** is a faith-based initiative for climate justice, bringing together Canadian faith communities and organizations under a unified banner to mobilize Canada-wide education, reflection, action and advocacy for climate justice. Click here for more information: <https://www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/ecological-justice/for-the-love-of-creation>.

September is also Climate Action Month at KAIROS: Each day in September, KAIROS will focus on an aspect of the climate crisis – sharing resources, events, stories from our members and global partners, and actions for climate justice. The calendar will focus on five weekly themes: Season of Creation, Just Transition, Indigenous Rights, Global Climate Justice, and Water: <https://www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/ecological-justice/climateactionmonth>.

St. Andrew's College: No Gala Gala!

COVID-19 has turned the world upside down and presented unexpected opportunities! One of those happen to be a [#NoGalaGala!](#) Intended to expand awareness of the college, and its commitment to ensure that *Justice-Driven Education for Christian Leadership* thrives in a time when commitment is clearly needed, not only in our Canadian context, but globally. Richard Manley-Tannis, Principal of St. Andrew's College invites you to join him and Tannis Schmidt, St. Andrew's Musician-in-Residence, on September 29, 2020 for a "No Gala Gala". In this musical conversation, they will discuss leadership, hope, and sharing the Good News in a world seeking light. For more information, please visit the St. Andrew's College web site: https://stu.usask.ca/standrews/college_news/chapelconvo.php. And to register, please use this CanadaHelps link: <https://bit.ly/34gpdIH>.

Emmanuel College: Online Education Response to COVID-19

At Emmanuel College, the health and safety of our students, faculty, librarians and staff are our top priority. We are making pedagogical and technological innovations to ensure that all course activity and interaction in the fall 2020 semester, and most of the winter term, will be online. Many courses are available to auditors for registration after August 15. See our course schedule for details and more information about our response to COVID-19. <https://emmanuel.utoronto.ca/current-students/course-and-registration-information/>. The College has hired an expert in Instructional Design and is in the process of long-term planning for flexible online and hybrid programs. Email emmanuel.admissions@utoronto.ca for more information!

Voices United, Communion Trays, Choir Gowns

St. Matthew's United, Calgary, is busy preparing for the impending sale of its building and has the following items which may be useful to another United Church: approximately 200 Voices United hymn books, some with music and some without; an oak trolley with wheels that holds all the Voices United Hymn Books; a large supply of communion serving trays; approximately 30 choir gowns, royal blue with white trim, in great condition and recently dry-cleaned. For more information, please contact [Wendy Knudson via email](#), or call 403-249-1721.

United Theological College: Bold Action to Advance Its Mission

Following a period of uncertainty, discernment, and careful deliberation, the Board of Governors of the United Theological College has decided, with regret, to sell UTC's building at McGill University. The proceeds from the sale of the building will be used to repay the College's debt in full, to provide the capital necessary to fund ongoing expenses, and to build toward a viable future. Allowing the College to forge new partnerships that will help it continue as a robust presence in the multicultural, multilingual, and primarily francophone context of Quebec. The full story can be found on the UTC web site: <https://utc.ca/latest-news/>.

Learning Opportunities ...

New Wine: Western Intercultural Ministry Network Gathering Online With Eric Law and Tony Snow

Join us for a cross-Canada gathering of people living out the United Church's intercultural vision. Rev. Dr. Eric Law and Tony Snow will be our lead resource people.

The event will be held over 3 Fridays: September 25, October 2, and October 9, 2020. Cost: **FREE**. (*Thank you for your support through Mission and Service!*)

These will be three-hour sessions, with presentations, reflection, song, and small group discussion. Tools for engaging with your ministry between sessions will be offered, and so will afternoon/evening informal conversation groups. For full information, please visit: <https://bit.ly/2CqFRjt>

The sessions are free but **registration is required**; [please click here](#) to register.

If you would like more information, please contact the Western Intercultural Ministry Network Executive through staff support Julie Graham, jgraham@united-church.ca.

Expressing Wonder Conference, Seeing the World with Eyes Wide Open

You are invited to participate in the fall on-line conference, Expressing Wonder, Seeing the World with Eyes Wide Open, October 2-4, 2020, sponsored by SSUC - Spiritual Seekers United in Community, Edmonton and Saskatoon (Southminster-Steinhauer United Church).

Theme Presenters include: Ali Akbar, CEO for the Saskatoon Open Door Society, a refugee and immigrant who is passionate about social justice and overcoming social inequity; Ernie Louttit, a member of the Saskatoon Police, who is a Missanabie Cree, an award winning author, blows the lid off of taboo topics around policing and racism; and Mitch Babin will share his art. On hand will be Nancy Steeves and Christopher New as well as Gretta Vosper and Scott Kearns with their spiritual message and music leadership. Cost is \$75 per viewing device. For all the information, the conference schedule and registration form, follow the link <https://ssucedmonton.com/expressing-wonder-2020>

Reminder: Funds Available for Your Anti-Racism Learning

Your Regional Council is offering the beginnings of a [recommended reading and viewing](#) self-education resource list. The Regional Council is offering up to \$30 for resources of your choice, whether from this list or beyond. Please see the recommended reading link for details. As we (hopefully) remain in the slower, gentler time of summer, consider taking the time to reflect on a book or movie that points us towards and challenges us to live into the commitment to being anti-racist churches.

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