



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

October 27, 2020

Announcements and information of interest to the people of the Northern Spirit region.

If you have news to share or information about an upcoming event or learning opportunity, please write a short article, and send it to Kathy Jackson, Administrative Support: kjackson@united-church.ca. We are unable to include posters or other attachments, but links to further information may be included. Alternatively, our Community of Faith Events Calendar is open 24/7 for online events that are open to the public. Events can be posted directly to the Newsfeed: <https://northernspiritr.ca/add-your-community-event/>.

Covenanting Service

The Worship Committee of St. David's United Church, Leduc, would like to invite all who are interested to their morning worship, Sunday, November 22, 2020, to join in the Covenanting Service for the Rev. Leigh Sinclair, Leduc and Beaumont's Community of Faith, St David's, and the Northern Spirit Regional Council. The service will be at 10:30 a.m. The service will be recorded and then broadcast on their YouTube and Facebook pages. The worship will be in-person, with physical distancing and mask wearing, along with any other precautions required or recommended by health officials.

COVID Updates ...

Congregational Finances During the Pandemic

On Wednesday October 28, 2020, at 4:00 PM (BC), 5:00 PM (AB and SK), 6:00 PM (MB and NW Ontario) Whether you're working on 2020 financial forecasts or a 2021 budget, all treasurers face more moving parts than ever before. Earlier this month, the federal government announced major subsidy program extensions which will likely impact both your current year forecast and any 2021 budgeting. Find out more about the webinar, and how to register [here](#).

Resuming In-Person Gatherings: A Memo from the Regional Council Executive

On September 9, Regional Council Chairperson Gord Waldie and Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy [sent a letter outlining important reminders, resources, and suggestions](#) regarding the difficult discernment of returning to in-person worship and building use. You are urged to read the letter and share it widely in your community of faith. There are resources to help you (see below).

Re-Opening your Church Building: Discernment and Planning Resources

Considering the apparent "second wave" of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all called to take responsibility for our safety and that of others around us. We know that complex discernment and planning is underway in many of our Communities of Faith. 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: please submit a copy of your Re-Opening Plan to the Regional Council Office:
NorthernSpirit@united-church.ca.

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Guidelines

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

Featured News ...

News from the Regional Council Executive

The October Newsletter from the Executive is now posted to the Regional Council web site. Please click on [October Executive Newsletter](#) to see what the Executive has been doing on our behalf.

Northern Spirit Regional Council 2nd Annual Meeting

Ministry Personnel (active and retired), elected Lay and Youth Representatives, and Guests met together over two sessions via Zoom, on Wednesdays, October 14 and 21. During these two sessions, delegates worshipped, learned, listened, discerned and decided. Video recordings and a written summary of both sessions are posted on the [2020 Annual Meeting](#) page of our web site. There are also links to the Affirming Ministry Task Group's PowerPoint presentation; information about the Remit to amend Basis of Union Article 10.0, which was agreed to by the Regional Council; and the Work Book for the Regional Council Meeting. Warm appreciation is extended to those who planned, led, provided tech support for, and attended the Annual Meeting.

Ministry and Personnel Committee Workshop

Pastoral Relations Minister Earl Reaburn will lead an online Ministry and Personnel Committee workshop in two sessions: Wednesday, November 4 and Tuesday, November 10. The first session will focus on the purpose and responsibilities of the Ministry and Personnel Committee. The second session will focus on building communities of respect. Each session will begin at 7:30 pm MST and last 90 minutes. Everyone is welcome for both or either session. To receive a zoom link to the workshop, please send an email to northernspirit@united-church.ca.

Opportunities to Serve the Regional Council

The Nominations Committee is looking for people from throughout the Northern Spirit region to fill vacancies on the Executive, and the Commissions, Committees and Task Groups. A list of the 2020-2022 leadership, including vacancies, has been posted to the Regional Council web site, and updates will be posted as they happen. Please check out the "[Get Involved](#)" page. If you, or someone you know, is interested in playing a role as our Regional Council continues to develop its mission and ministry, please contact the Regional Council Office: northernspirit@united-church.ca. There are many opportunities available. Where do you feel called to serve?

Clusters and Networks Update (and a Reminder of \$\$!)

We know more online meetings may be the last thing on your mind. But just in case: If you are considering starting a new Network or Cluster, or if you've already been gathering, please take a moment to make sure that the Regional Council knows you're meeting. If your Cluster or Network is open to new members (and we hope it is) please make sure you're listed. Please contact the Regional

Council Office (northernspirit@united-church.ca) or Julie Graham (jgraham@united-church.ca) to make sure we have contact information and a short description. And remember: there is money in the Regional Council budget to support your work. Maybe you want an offer to pay for event registrations or resources. Maybe you want to submit receipts for a get together lunch over Zoom to support a sense of community. Don't let funding worries get in the way! Questions about this? Contact the office.

Meet the Faith Lift Chaplain

Denise Davis Taylor is the Chaplain, sponsored by the United Church of Canada, and located at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. If you know students who are in post-secondary education in Edmonton please pass along this link, [Meet the Chaplain](#), and the following information to them. Denise can be reached at uccm@ualberta.ca. The website can be reached by clicking this link: [Faith Lift Campus Ministry](#). Faith Lift Campus ministry, along with all student services at the University of Alberta, provides its services online. You can follow the campus ministry on Facebook, FaithLiftUAlberta, or its new Instagram account, [faithliftualberta](#), for resources, reflections and updates on what is happening to Nurture Your Spirit while you are in postsecondary studies.

In Other News ...

Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble: Kitchen Sink Open Conversation Series

This series of Zoom gatherings is being held November 3 and continuing every second Tuesday, 4:30-6:00 PM (Mountain); 5:30-7:00 PM Central. [Full information on the series is here](#). A variety of conversation topics are offered, all of them a part of becoming and staying LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit-affirming in our church.

There Are No Closets in Tipis: Conversation with Jack Saddleback

Thursday November 5 2020, 4:30 in BC, 5:30 in AB, 6:30 in SK and MB. Riveting, captivating, real, insightful, grounded, and illuminated are just a few words to describe Jack Saddleback's presentation of his life as a Cree Two-Spirit Champion from Samson Cree Nation, Maskwacis, Alberta. Many people across the Prairies have experienced Jack's leadership in community and province-wide settings. This event live streams here: <https://youtu.be/Wu2RvFjgcoU> (A collaboration between The United Church of Canada's Indigenous Ministries and Justice Circle, Pacific Mountain Regional Council's Pollinate Ministries and LeaderShift, and the Shining Waters Regional Council.)

St. Stephen's College Convocation

The Co-Chancellors, Colm and Lynda O'Carroll, together with Principal and Dean, Dr. Fred Tappenden, warmly invite friends, students and faculty to attend the 96th Convocation of St. Stephen's College. For the first time ever, St. Stephen's will host a virtual convocation. The ceremony itself will be featured on the College's website, together with online profiles that highlight many of its graduands. Please join in at 2:00 pm on November 9, 2020 to celebrate the graduating students. Further details can be found on the St. Stephen's College web site: www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens.

News from Across the United Church

Our world seems smaller and more confined since COVID began. May these stories help widen it, and help us see where our prayers and actions from home can support those we may never meet in person, but with whom we are part of the Body of Christ.

The United Church Supports Mi'kmaq Treaty Rights

Being the church together means living into the [1986 Apology to Indigenous Peoples](#) together, and committing to understanding what it means to be Treaty People today. Tensions remain very high in Mi'kmaq territory/Nova Scotia, as the Sipekne'katik First Nation exercises its treaty rights to fish lobster over sometimes violent protest from non-Indigenous fishers. Regional Council 15 is asking for prayers from across the church and helped organize an interfaith leaders' delegation to the area in late October. The national church shares [the prayer and an update here](#). Moderator Richard Bott and Indigenous Ministries Executive Minister Murray Pruden have responded with a [letter to the church](#) that says, in part, that, "As a church that has repudiated colonial doctrines and committed itself to Indigenous rights, to the ongoing work of building right relations, and to opposing racism in all of its forms, we cannot remain silent." ([Également disponible en français.](#))

Continued Reflections on Racism

As part of the United Church's striving to be anti-racist, the Rev. Dr. Paul Douglas Walfall [offers us a reflection on "social holiness"](#), our collective commitment as a church and Canadians to truly acknowledge the impact of racism. "It needs to be stated again, that, when people say that there is systemic racism in Canada, it is not a moral judgement against anyone. It is not to suggest that people are not good and caring. It is, however, to soberly acknowledge that, systemically, a Black or an Indigenous person is more likely to be at a disadvantage when dealing with the institutions and policies in our nation."

Stewardship Update for November: Around the Globe and at Home

God's Mission, Our Gifts offers the latest stewardship news and resources here. This month, stories include gratitude from [Beirut, Lebanon](#) for our gifts; the ongoing struggle for peace within and between some Asian nations; ideas for thank you letters at a time when people may struggle to give; a reminder of other resources, including offering prayers for November that are [here](#). Read the [whole \(short!\) newsletter](#) here.

Learning Opportunities ...

Open Out Podcasts

The newest episode of Open Out, "Space, Place & Displacement", is now available. As we open our faith communities to welcome those who are somehow different than us (culturally, racially, economically, etc.), what is it that we are offering them? This episode looks at how a process called 'placemaking' can help communities intentionally open outwards, embody their best intent, and give grit and gravitas to their welcome. We'll draw on insights from the worlds of architecture, cultural geography, U.S. white supremacists (yep, that's not a typo) and music. You can find it on most podcast servers or by clicking this link: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/917410/6068287>. Open Out podcasts grew out of research sponsored by the United Church Foundation through its McGeachy Scholarship. The podcasts are hosted by Bill Millar.

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