



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

November 10, 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://northernspiritrc.ca/add-your-community-event/>.

Please note that there will be no Northern Spirit E-Newsletter next week, November 17. The editor/publisher will be taking a vacation week. We will be back on track again for the November 24 Edition. Stay tuned ... and stay warm, safe and well.

COVID Updates ...

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](#) (updated November 4) 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.

Alberta Government is Supporting Safe Faith Community Gatherings

On November 9, the Alberta government announced that it is investing \$1 million to help faith-based and cultural organizations recover costs associated with COVID-19. From hosting online events, to facility upgrades and offering PPE, faith-based and cultural community groups have persevered to continue bringing hope, joy and connection to their communities. The new Faith-based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant will provide funding to offset costs related to following public health measures to ensure important religious and cultural gatherings can continue safely. For more information, please visit: [Faith-Based and Cultural Facility Relaunch Grant](#). Application intake deadlines are December 15, 2020, and March 1, 2021.

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 ...

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 2020-2012 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?

Video Licensing Opportunity: Deadline November 18

The United Church has negotiated video licensing agreements that include Paramount, Universal, Alliance Atlantis, New Line Cinema, Miramax, Disney, Veggie Tales and many more. Public Performance Licenses enable your community of faith to show full-length or clips from movies or TV shows for public viewing as a part of things like worship, fundraisers, family nights, youth group events, or educational programs. For more information about these licenses, the fee structure, and how to apply, please visit: <http://buyingunited.net/video-licensing>. You can also look at some [frequently asked questions here](#). The deadline for this round of applications is November 18th, 2020. We will offer another round of licenses to be available starting part way through next year. For any additional questions, please email or call Alexandra at edge@united-church.ca, or phone, 1-800-268-3781 Ext. 4157.

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.

Invite a Global Speaker to your Worship or Community of Faith

[People in Partnership](#) invites you to learn more about the work and mission of partners around the world by inviting an individual to come and share their stories with United Church of Canada communities of faith. Find out more about these pilgrims, companions, co-workers and learners [here](#). Although speakers are grouped by region, many are available to be present and share remotely with your community of faith online. Please contact pip@united-church.ca to invite a speaker.

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, [faithliftoalberta](#), for resources, reflections and updates on what is happening to Nurture Your Spirit while you are in postsecondary studies.

In Other News ...

New Recruitment Officer for St. Andrew's College

St. Andrew's College has just hired a new Recruitment Officer. The Rev. Shawn Sanford Beck took up the post shortly after Thanksgiving, and is looking forward to conversing with folks in each of the Prairie Regions (and beyond). If you know of anyone in your community of faith who might benefit from and contribute to theological education, please help connect them with Shawn. He can be reached at shawn.sanfordbeck@usask.ca or 306 441 6367. Please click on this link to meet Shawn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4e9TXm5fTI4>.

UCRD Store: Books, Gifts, Resources and More

The United Church Resource Distribution Store is still very much alive and well. Although opportunities for Book Displays were not available in 2020, production has been moving forward behind the scenes. Please visit the newly renovated UCRD Store web site to shop for United Church swag and resources, church supplies, a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction, gifts, and many more surprises: <https://ucrdstore.ca/>.

Local Petition to Save Alberta Parks has United Church Roots

The Alberta government plans to close 20 park sites and delist 164 others, citing low visitor numbers and savings of \$5 million (which equals about \$1.14 per Albertan). Once these parks are delisted they no longer have any protection and can be converted into Crown Land, which does not have the same environmental and recreational protections as parks. Neither the wider public nor First Nations or Metis were consulted about this, so concerns about this decision include creation care, democracy, and respect for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Athabasca, Stony Plain, and Living Spirit United Churches have been involved in creating a petition asking the government to not only save their local parks, but to halt the process entirely. This [media story](#) offers some additional background and local perspective. The petition has now been tabled in the Legislature, but people can develop their own and keep the pressure going!

Advent Unwrapped Resources

Get ready for Christ(mas)! Advent - a holy, four-week countdown to Jesus' birthday - begins on Sunday, November 29. Get ready to make room for Christ and the radical, countercultural messages that Christ brings. Throughout the season, videos, prayers, family resources, and reflections on this page will introduce and explore the Christmas story. For more worship resources visit the United Church web site: [Advent and Christmas worship pages](#). Follow the [Advent Unwrapped](#) Facebook page for regular updates on all kinds of resources.

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

This series of Zoom gatherings is being held November 17, and 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.

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. If you or your community of faith would like to see a snapshot of all of our Mission and Service givings, and what they support, [click here for the 2019 overview](#).

Learning Opportunities ...

Refresher Course for Intentional Interim Ministers

The Office of Vocation, in cooperation with First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council is offering an online refresher course for intentional interim ministers, from Wednesday January 13th to February 10th, 2020 (12:30-4:30 Eastern Time). The course, hosted by Pegi Ridout, is open only to Ministry Personnel who have previously completed Interim Ministry Training provided by either the United Church of Canada or the Interim Ministry Network (IMN). This program is recognized by the United Church and by the INM as meeting the educational standards for designation for appointment as an Interim Minister. The cost for the course is \$275. For more information, or to apply for the course, please visit: <https://uceast.ca/57737-intentional-interim-ministry-refresher-course-2021/>.

For the Love of Creation: Climate Change and Sustainability Events

The United Church of Canada is part of a national ecumenical effort for Climate Justice called, *For the Love of Creation*, joining with over thirty national church and faith-based organizations. This effort focuses on theological reflection, local/congregational engagement, and political advocacy. There are a series of events coming up through November to help us engage in different aspects of the often-difficult climate change conversation. [Click here for an overview, and to register](#). More details about *For the Love of Creation*, and many introductory resources, are available here, [on their brand-new website](#).

Video: Olive Harvest in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

As Canada settles into winter, the Middle East also prepares for the close of the growing season. The annual olive harvest is a deeply significant time, culturally, economically, and spiritually. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, it is also a time of great tension and violence. Olive groves are frequently targeted by extremist Israeli settlers who are living in the Occupied Territories in defiance of international law. The World Council of Churches offers this short video about the struggles facing Palestinian farmers: <https://youtu.be/d2Nk3a3DcHo>.

2021 Virtual Festival of Homiletics: Registration Now Open

The COVID-19 pandemic has made life harder for just about everyone. To uphold the health and safety of our community and yours, we're pleased to host the Festival of Homiletics virtually again in 2021. [Registration is now open](#) for the virtual Festival of Homiletics, May 17–21, 2021. We're excited about the [superb thinkers and teachers](#) who will present on this year's theme, "Preaching for the Future Church".

Northern Spirit Regional Council Office
13535 122 Avenue NW Edmonton AB T5L 2V7 780.435.3995
www.northernspirirc.ca

Earl Reaburn, Pastoral Relations Minister
ereaburn@united-church.ca

Kathy Jackson, Administrative Support
kjackson@united-church.ca