



NORTHERN SPIRIT REGIONAL COUNCIL

The United Church of Canada

Regional Council News

November 24, 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/>.

Family News

We extend our congratulations to Captain Tyler S. Powell, a United Church Military Chaplain currently deployed in Ukraine, who was recently recognized with the Ukrainian Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of “excellence in service, professionalism and international cooperation”.

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](#)

Congregational Finances During the Pandemic: Webinars for Treasurers

On Wednesdays, November 25 and December 2, at 5:00 p.m. (MST), United in Learning will host two webinars for treasurers. Whether you're working on 2020 financial forecasts or a 2021 budget, all treasurers face more moving parts than ever before. The session on November 25 will focus on preparing your 2021 budget, and the December 2 session will be an "Ask Us Anything" session, with Clyde Harris and Erik Mathiesen answering any outstanding questions you may have. Please visit the United in Learning web site for [more information](#).

Featured News ...

Second Annual Regional Council Meeting: Find out What Happened

As follow-up to the Regional Council Meeting in October, recordings and summaries of each evening's proceedings have been posted on the Regional Council web site. Please visit the [Regional Council Meeting](#) page to view and read about the worship, reports, discussion and decisions of the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Northern Spirit Regional Council.

News from the Regional Council Executive

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

2020 Assessments and Charitable Returns: Final Reminder

Finance administrator Heather Dootoff has [some reminders about assessments](#) and charitable returns (because we all know how much fun we have with year end finances). It has been a tough year, and for those of you who have already paid your assessments in full: please know that we appreciate that you have done so in these very challenging circumstances. Your assessment makes possible a huge range of ministry in our church.

Anti-Racism Resource List from Trinity United Church, Edmonton

The good people of Trinity United put together [a list of anti-racism resources](#) they've found helpful in their anti-racism work. This list is a permanent work in progress, as new resources are found. Consider which ones would offer both space and a challenge to your community of faith.

Reminder to Submit any Anti Racism Resource Receipts

Speaking of anti-racism resources: This is the last call on the Regional Council offer to pay for anti-racism resources for use as study or in your community of faith. Finance administrator Heather Dootoff asks you to send the receipts to her by email if possible by December 4: hdootoff@united-church.ca. What's this about? [Click here to learn more](#).

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 2020-2021

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. Where do you feel called to serve?

In Other News ...

Peoples of African Descent and the Canadian Churches

We are now more than halfway through the UN’s International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD, 2015-2024), which aims to ensure space and voice for people of African descent across the world, and to make anti-racism, especially anti-black racism, a global priority. Heeding this call, the Canadian Council of Churches invites Christians across Canada to “Recognition, Justice, and Development: Peoples of African Descent and Canadian Churches”, a Cross-Canada Event that will take place November 26, 2020, 5:00-6:30 PM (MST), and will feature a keynote presentation by Dr. Afua Cooper on the realities of current systemic anti-Black racism in the Canadian context and challenges to the Canadian church, as well as a multifaceted panel discussion from diverse Christian voices across Canada, small group discussion, and a time of prayer. [Click here for full information](#).

No Room at the Inn

We have received information about this year’s “No Room in the Inn” campaign, a project of the Edmonton & District Council of Churches (EDCC). This year the project will support two women’s shelters in downtown Edmonton, operated by Catholic Social Services. Details of the project can be found in the [Brochure](#) posted on the Northern Spirit web site. The context of COVID-19 has introduced a number of challenges to traditional methods of producing publicity materials and conducting the campaign. This year, the EDCC intends to conduct an online campaign through its CanadaHelps site. Donors are encouraged to visit the collection site: www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/m/55480.

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 make sure that the Regional Council knows about it. If your Cluster or Network is open to new members (and we hope it is) please make sure you’re listed. 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. Don’t let funding worries get in the way. There is money in the Regional Council budget to support your work.

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](#).

'Tis the Season: Advent and Christmas Events and Resources ...

Gifts with Vision Catalogue: Ideas for your Christmas Giving

The United Church's Gifts with Vision offers us alternative gifts that empower communities, and which don't add more "things" to a world awash with them. Consider this for Christmas or birthday gifts this year. [Have a look at the many inspiring options.](#)

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/>.

Advent Unwrapped Resources

Get ready for Christ(mas)! Advent - a holy, four-week countdown to Jesus' birthday - begins this coming 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.

Upcoming Events and Learning Opportunities ...

Book Launch: Breakthrough Moments

The Rev. Janet Stobie has gathered a collection of familiar bible stories and re-told them from the perspective of someone who was a witness. Each story challenges our faithful behaviour in difficult, yet believable situations. These monologues can be easily adapted to chancel dramas, bringing the Biblical texts to life in a way that can never be forgotten by an audience/congregation. The book will be launched in a Zoom event with special guest, Linnea Good, on Saturday, November 28, at 5:00 p.m. (MST). For more information or to receive a link to the Zoom event, please visit: www.janetstobie.com.

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

The final event in this series, Tuesday, December 1, 4:30-6:00 PM (MST), will focus on Global partners and LGBTQIA+ rights. [Full information on the series is here.](#)

Mass Hysterical, a Comedic Cantata

On Tuesday, December 15, 6:00 p.m. (MST), Comedy icon Colin Mochrie hosts Mass Hysterical, a Comedic Cantata. This video celebrates more than 1000 years of ecclesiastical music, taking a satirical, but loving, look at the repertoire, the composers, the personalities, and even the congregations themselves, beginning somewhere in the 8th Century. Mass Hysterical Chorus. The cantata is presented by the Kingston Road Village Concert Series in conjunction with Kingston Road United Church, Toronto; Emmanuel United Church, Waterloo; and St. John's United Church of Georgetown and Glen Williams. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit: <https://sidedooraccess.com/artists/MassHysterical>. You can check out the trailer here: www.youtube.com.

St. Andrew's College Winter 2021 Courses

Feeling cooped up? A little bit of cabin fever? Is your mind feeling numb and blank? Forget COVID ... you may be experiencing Theology-Deficit Syndrome! St. Andrew's College has just what the doctor ordered: a panoply of winter courses. Perfect for these pandemic times, the College is offering all of its courses online, so you can participate without having to leave the comfort and safety of your home. This winter, course offerings include preaching, Christian education, United Church history theology and polity, and Race Colonialism Canadian identity and Intercultural Ministry. And audit fees are half-price! For more information or to register, please visit the College web site: <https://stu.usask.ca/standrews/students/course-listings/current-courses.php>.

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.

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